POETICAL WORKS

OF

SYDNEY DOBELL.

VOL. I.

THE

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OF

SYDNEY DOBELL.

'The flashes of the fire
Are fire, that which was soul is spirit still,
And shall not die.'

WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTICE AND MEMOIR

BY

JOHN NICHOL, M.A. Oxon. LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

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IN MEMORIAM.

THE POET whose work is for the first time, in a proximately complete form, brought before the public, has been removed from us under circumstances which devolve on those who were privileged with his companionship the duty of endeavouring to supplement the somewhat fragmentary impressions of his career. Mr. Sydney Dobell died on August 22, in his fifty-first year; his literary fame was achieved before his thirtieth; his literary labours may be said to have well nigh closed with his thirty-fifth. Two longer poems and a volume of minor pieces, making the greater bulk of what he has left behind him, are the product of comparative youth, but bear the stamp of an original and singularly subtle mind, and exhibit sufficient power to continue to affect the thoughts and sympathies of his contemporaries. Passing in his prime, he has yet lived through fifteen years of enforced silence—his brilliant promise having been cruelly curtailed by physical disaster—into a new atmosphere of the rapidly shifting cloud-strata of nineteenth century criticism. 'Proterit dies diem.' Every decade has its standards, idols, aversions and neglects. The Preraphaelite has succeeded

to the so-called Spasmodic, as the Spasmodic flashed for a season across the Tennysonian, as the Tennysonian superseded the Byronic school. This is not the place to attempt to estimate the import of these changes in the history of Art; but they testify to the shortness of our memories. Our wish is to be permitted briefly to direct attention to some of the attributes of a character which, more steadfast than fashions, stronger than suffering, and superior to the frustration of unselfish ambitions, has left to all within the range of its influence a noble example of an English life.

Sydney Dobell was born on April 5, 1824, at Cranbrook, in Kent, the eldest son of the descendant of an old Sussex family distinguished on the Cavalier side when Charles was king. From both sides of his ancestry he inherited literary and speculative tastes, manifested during his early years, spent at Peckham Rye, near London, by the composition of some precocious juvenile verses. His mother was a daughter of Samuel Thompson, a well-known political reformer in the early part of the century, and advocate of a new union of Christians on a comprehensive basis. His father was John Dobell, author of a pamphlet on Government, who subsequently settled as a wine merchant at Cheltenham. In his twelfth year the family removed to Gloucestershire, and the poet maintained with various degrees of activity till his death his connection with the calling and the district. In practical illustration of a theory like that carried out with results in some respects similar by the elder Mill, he was, with four other sons and five daughters, educated by private

tutors, and by his own study, pursued with a zeal already excessive, entirely at home, and was never sent to school or University. To this fact he makes an interesting reference in the course of some frequently humorous verses on Cheltenham College, which date from his eighteenth year. They profess to have been discovered in an ancient manuscript, and copy, with imperfect success, the spelling of Chaucer, but they evince the passion for nature which is one of the most easily appreciable charms of his maturest work :

'Little in human schules have I beene ;
My colledge is all carpeted with greene,
And archèd with a roof of spangled blue,
My Hippocrene is the early dewe,
My seate turf-piled is dight with faery sheene,
My table some old stone no handes did hewe,
Or twisted roote of oake or classicke beech.
My servitor, the sweetly spoken breeze,
Strange unwritte books doth bringe me one by one.
Well pleased I make and take my own degree,
Master of many arts no schule can teach ;
My colledge hath no termes. Its doctors are
Righte eloquent sweet flow'res and whisperinge trees,
Whereof the winde takes counselle ; everie star
That discourseth all nighte with silent speeche ;
Greye reverende hilles with foreheads bare with age,
Great stormes that argue sternlie each with each
When woods chant anthems, and a streame or two
For work-day musicke.'

Home education undoubtedly fosters the precocious forms of genius ; but in absence of social checks it too often permits originality to degenerate into eccentricity. To the circumstances of the poet's early training may be traced many peculiarities of a mind never sufficiently

influenced by the contact and friction of its equals. Innate benevolence of nature (*εὐφυία*) prevented this isolation in Mr. Dobell's case from manifesting itself as a moral, but it remained an intellectual, defect. He lived more for those around him than *for himself*, but he lived mentally to a great extent *by himself;* for though he gave much he received little, and found it hard to descend from the heights among which, even in boyhood, in solitary night-watches, he loved to lose himself, to the beaten paths of meaner life. He had all the reverence for superior wisdom which belongs to wisdom, but to ordinary criticism he remained singularly unamenable.

In 1844 he married Emily, daughter of George Fordham, of Odsey House, Cambridgeshire—whose family is one of the oldest in that county—a lady to whom in his sixteenth year he had been engaged; for thirty years his constant companion in 'the quiet woodland ways.' The early years of their wedded life were divided between residence at Cheltenham, where Sydney continued to superintend his father's business, and some pleasant country places among the hills, the chief of which were Hucclecote on the Via Arminia and Coxhorne House, their home for five summers in the valley of Charlton Kings. This period, as that which preceded it, was marked by the composition of many minor pieces, in some of which he appeared as a zealous politician and ardent reformer, and by the progress of his first considerable work.

The charm of Mr. Dobell's manner had in his youth at Cheltenham attracted the attention of the most culti-

vated men in the neighbourhood and some distinguished strangers; among these Thomas Campbell visited him and admired his powers of conversation. A meeting with Mr. Stansfeld and Mr. George Dawson at Coxhorne is said to have originated the society of the 'Friends of Italy.' The poet's enthusiasm for the Italian cause, with the various fluctuations of which he continued to be intimately acquainted, never abated; it remained —as evinced by one of his latest fragments entitled 'Mentana'—amid many changes of opinion, a link between his earlier and later politics. The outcome of this sentiment, his first published poem 'The Roman,' written among the Cotswolds, and inspired by the stirring events which have since proved prophetic of the liberation of the Peninsula, appeared in 1850. Its success was rapid and unmistakable. The theme and its treatment, in happy accord with a prevalent vein of popular feeling—in no less degree the intrinsic merit of the work, the flow of the lyrics, the strong sweep of the graver verse, the richness and beauty of the imagery—attracted universal attention, and enlisted the favour alike of the general public and of the most discerning critics. At this distance of time we may be permitted to reproduce a few sentences from the welcome given to 'The Roman' by the *Athenæum*— from the pen, it is believed, of a highly accomplished and successful author, to whom the identity of the young poet, veiled under the assumed name of Sydney Yendys, was then unknown. After adverting to the opposite and equally fatal defects of the merely florid and the bald style of verse, to one or other of which most minor poets

are liable, the reviewer proceeds: 'Any work, therefore, which indicates a return to the completeness of poetic art must have welcome at our hands, and we know of none for years that so thoroughly fulfils the condition as this dramatic poem. It possesses unity of purpose and of conduct. In dealing with emotions the writer touches with equal power the pathetic and the sublime, and to the illustration of these feelings he brings a fancy which can rivet by its boldness and enchain by its beauty. Never shrinking from a conception on account of its daring, he generally seeks to present it in the most lucid form. To a large extent he fulfils both the requirements of the poet: he comprehends his inspiration and renders it comprehensible to others. Throughout his whole volume we can recall but few offences against perspicuity and good taste—the chief faults being an occasional diffusiveness and verbal iteration, and some abruptness in the development of a love-interest at the beginning. It is less a fault than an immaturity that the author's images are sometimes so lavished as rather to display the opulence of his store than to turn it to account.' Then after an outline of the plot and a selection of passages, in which the description of the hero-monk, the exquisite lyric—

'Oh, Lila! round our early love,'

the impassioned appeal to the children, and the account of the brother's death figure conspicuously, the critic adds: 'Should anyone, after the preceding extracts, doubt whether we have a new poet amongst us, we should

almost despair of his conversion.' He goes on, however, to adduce Mr. Dobell's 'Coliseum,' the classic grandeur of which justifies the apparent audacity of encountering the comparison which it suggests. He concludes: 'The poet's defects are those of youth, and it might excuse far graver ones. His merits, combining art with impulse and imagination, are such as youth rarely attains, but which are the true pledges of high and lasting excellence.' This critique, as just as cordial, struck the key-note of a general acclaim, in the echo of which the book was read and admired on both sides of the Atlantic. It had abundance of minor merits, but its presiding charm lay in its novelty and earnestness of noble aim. 'The Roman' was hailed as the product of a man of refined culture, whose sympathies went beyond the mere love of 'harmony in tones and numbers hit' to the wider movements of his age. In spite of some traces of haste and the excessive preponderance of monologue in the drama, it is marked by a cosmopolitan grasp evidencing catholic interests beyond the 'streak of silver sea,' often wanting in the masterpieces of more consummate artists.

About this time, when the gates of the temple or the mart of literature seemed to open wide to the rising author, he made a hurried visit to London, and was frequently urged by editors and others to write for various periodicals; but circumstances interfered with his availing himself to any considerable extent of their invitations. In the summer of 1851 he made, with Mrs. Dobell, a short tour in Switzerland, which left its natural impress on his subsequent work. On his return to England,

during a longer residence in the capital, he gathered round him a circle of literary admirers, and, either by personal intercourse or correspondence, at this or subsequent periods, made the acquaintance of most of the eminent writers of the day, among whom may be mentioned Robert Browning, Coventry Patmore, and Philip Bailey, George Macdonald, Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. Deutsch of the Talmud, Mr. Monckton Milnes, now Lord Houghton, and Mr. Westland Marston, with the last of whom he remained through life on terms of cordial friendship. Acknowledgment should also be made to the generous appreciation of his genius effectively expressed by a discerning though sometimes erratic critic, the Rev. George Gilfillan. The poet's appreciation of art, of which he was a fine critic, brought him into pleasant relationship with Mr. Ruskin, Holman Hunt, and Gabriel Rossetti; his zeal for continental liberty was a passport to the affection of Joseph Mazzini; at a later date he met and thoroughly appreciated the greatest orator of our century, Louis Kossuth. Introduced to Mr. Tennyson at Cheltenham, and to Mr. Thomas Carlyle in London, he was brought into closer contact with those leaders of our literature during their common stay at Malvern. They had many walks and talks together, and maintained a considerable degree of intimacy. He had afterwards opportunities of meeting Mr. Tennyson in the Isle of Wight, and it may be conjectured that Mr. Carlyle's influence played its part in weaning Mr. Dobell from the more or less democratic views which marked the early stages of his intellectual career. Among his letters we may refer to those inter-

changed with Charlotte Brontë as of acknowledged literary interest on both sides. Meanwhile he published his second considerable poem, 'Balder,' begun at Coxhorne, continued among the Alps, and finished in 1853 at Amberley Hill. This remarkable work, destined to be the first part of a trilogy of the artistic life, is the embodiment of the author's deepest thought and highest poetry. No more exquisite descriptions of external nature in her various phases of glory and of gloom, are to be found in our language than those scattered over its finest pages. The profound psychological analysis which underlies the exuberance of a somewhat recluse imagination, bears witness to the comparative maturity of a powerful mind battling with the problems of a complex age. 'Balder' was, with the general public and the majority of critics, less fortunate than its predecessor; nor, while demurring to their judgment, can we altogether wonder at the contrast. In the first place, it is harder to read, as it must have been much harder to write, than 'The Roman,' and the majority of readers are intolerant of poetry that taxes their wits. The plot is painful and the thought somewhat monotonous—for it harps, though with marvellous subtilty, on a few strings—and we are wont to demand from verse above all things pleasure and variety. Its faults of detail are more numerous than in 'The Roman.' Side by side with passages of Shakespearean grasp we have outrages against taste and sense. The admissibility of such exhibitions of horror and disgust as the picture of Tyranny is at least questionable, though the example

of Dante may be pleaded in their behalf. In the second place, the moral purpose of the whole work has been so utterly mistaken that 'Balder' has, even by friendly critics, been supposed to be the author's ideal character, and even preposterously confounded with a character between which and it there was not one common feature—his own. The repulsive egotism of the hero was probably recognised by no one so much as by Mr. Dobell—himself perhaps the most unselfish literary man of our century—and the object of the whole was to show, in another fashion than that of Lear or Faust, how even such an incarnation of arrogance and pride might be wrenched by trial and suffering · μαθήματα παθήματα' to a higher life. Even the dénouement of the fragment before us was misunderstood ; for Amy, saved from death at the last moment, was to play an important part in the subsequent evolution of the drama. But the plan of the book is unfortunate. It is pitched on too great a scale, and demanded more than the energy of one life for its accomplishment.

Every part of a consummate work of art ought, like the hand or foot of a finished organism, to bear evidence of its purpose. Did the 'Inferno' stand by itself, it would still have a terrible unity. The same holds good of every section of any of the great ancient trilogies, as it does in our own day of Mr. Swinburne's 'Bothwell.' Mr. Dobell's tragèdy, on the other hand, is not only incomplete, but confusingly chaotic ; the richness of its imagery is like cloth of gold flung over the limbs created by a Frankenstein. But while any criticaster can sneer at those lapses

where the poet manifestly crosses the boundary line between the sublime and the ridiculous, it may be doubted if any living English poet has scaled the same heights. There is not a chapter which does not bear witness to the author's indefinite power and almost measureless capacity for noble passion. Its dioramas of scenery are drawn by the eye and pencil of one who from a watch-tower on the hills outgazed the stars, and paid homage to a hundred dawns, and

> 'hung his room with thought
> Morning and noon and eve and night, and all
> The changing seasons.'

His Chamouni rivals that of Coleridge, as his Coliseum rivals that of Byron. His descriptions of Spring have the luxuriance and the truth of Shelley's. The pastoral loveliness of the long summer's day on the hills (Scene XXIV.) recalls the idyll in the Bohemia of the 'Winter's Tale.' The music of Amy's songs ripples alongside of the terror and tumult of the tragedy with 'a dying fall like the sweet south.' 'Genius,' said one of its few appreciative critics, the writer of a review in 'Fraser's Magazine,' 'is so unmistakably present in every page of the strange book before us, that to give examples from one without injustice to the others we find to be beyond possibility in our limits.' 'Balder' is not likely to become popular in our generation; to most readers it will remain a portent; but, in spite of flagrant defects, it has stamina for permanence, and will keep its place in our literature as a mine for poets.

In 1854 Mr. Dobell left Coxhorne and took up his resi-

dence in Edinburgh, having gone there to seek medical advice for his wife, whose health had for some time back caused him great anxiety. In the course of the three subsequent years, the winters of which were spent mainly in Edinburgh, the summers in various parts of the Scotch Highlands, he became associated with another group of literary men, with some of whom he maintained a life-long friendship. Twenty years ago, though the noon-tide glory of the Northern Athens had waned, a pleasant twilight of culture lingered about her halls and hills. Original force and talent, apart from that which is strictly professional or physical, had not been driven south of the Tweed by 'the Franciscan and Dominican licensers.' Mr. Dobell was soon brought into contact with the brightest and best spirits within his new radius. Foremost among these were Mr. John Hunter, the Mæcenas of Craigcrook, whose genial hospitality resembled that of the poet in delicacy and open-handedness; the lamented Dr. Samuel Brown—our modern Paracelsus, with the keen eye of genius for all its kindred; Dr. John Brown, 'der Einzige,' our prose poet, who happily remains 'the loved of all,' transmitting to ours the spirit of a more magnanimous age; the veteran Dr. George Combe; Hugh Miller, of the Rocks, his strong mind yet undistracted by the clash of irreconcilables; the industrious and intelligent Chamberses; Dr. and Mrs. Hanna; Miss Catherine Sinclair, Mrs. Steuart Menteath, the gifted authoress of 'Lays of the Kirk and Covenant;' Mrs. Stirling, sister of Mr. Hunter, and authoress of 'Fanny Hervey;' the artists, Sir Noel Paton and James Archer;

among Professors, Dr. afterwards Sir James Simpson; Edward Forbes, equally subtle in literature and science; Piazzi Smyth, the Astronomer Royal; the poet Aytoun, a man whom this generation regretfully recalls as one who, himself excelling, had a claim to teach; and the indomitable Blackie with his accomplished wife: with all of these Mr. and Mrs. Dobell maintained, throughout the term of their stay, and with many of them till the close of his life, a more or less intimate intercourse. On occasion of a visit to St. Andrews they were cordially welcomed by the venerable Sir David Brewster, and made the acquaintance of Professor Ferrier. Of eminent or learned men who, belonging to other centres, were introduced to Mr. Dobell in Edinburgh, we may mention Professor Craik of Belfast, Sir William Thomson and the late Professor Nichol of Glasgow, Mr. Spencer Baynes—now Professor Baynes of St. Andrews—Canon Kingsley, Mr. Dallas, the redoubtable critic of the 'Times,' and Mr. Alfred Vaughan, the accomplished author of 'Hours with the Mystics.'

During almost the whole of this period the Poet was united by ties of social intercourse and literary brotherhood with the late Mr. Alexander Smith, a man of imperfect culture, but endowed with a rich native genius, whom it has been a late fashion to depreciate as unduly as it was, during the meteor blaze of his 'Life Drama,' to over-exalt. With this friend he issued in 1855 a series of stirring sonnets on our Crimean struggle; this was followed by a volume inspired by the same theme, 'England in Time of War,' in which the lyrical genius, patriotic

zeal, and 'fair humanities' of the author are variously and amply displayed. The success of this work was intermediate between that of 'the Roman' and 'Balder.' The theme was well chosen, and the incisive force of some of the chants, expressive of the hopes and fears that then thrilled through the heart of England, commanded general sympathy and appreciation. Among the most deservedly admired of these are 'The Mother's Lesson,' 'Tommy's Dead,' 'The Little Girl's Song,' 'Home Wounded,' 'An Evening Dream,' 'An Aspiration of the Spirit,' and 'Grass from the Battle-field.'

Mr. Dobell was always a patriotic politician, but there is little of politics, in a narrow sense, in these volumes: the author dismisses diplomacy in an angry sonnet, and prefers to bring before us the joys and woes of poor soldiers and their wives, to discussing the debates of courts and cabinets. In other pieces, his rich picturesque power and delicate sense of melody find full scope. The opening lines of 'A Shower in War-Time' are remarkable for their music, 'Lady Constance' for its rich dramatic variety, 'The Prayer of the Understanding' for its subtle under-currents of religious thought; 'He Loves and he Rides Away,' combines these qualities, and is, with 'Keith of Ravelston,' a genuine ballad, deservedly a universal favourite. There is room for difference of opinion with regard to the success with which the author has made use of the Scotch dialect, and no room for doubt as to his excessive employment of verbal repetition in such pieces as 'Wind,' 'Farewell,' 'The Recruit's Ball,' and others. In the last-named, as elsewhere, it is manifest that the

Author's forte did not lie in the direction of humorous writing; but the volumes, as a whole, marked by depth of sympathy and vigour of style, are not unworthy his fame.

Mr. Dobell's residence in Edinburgh was distinguished by many of those acts of disinterested kindness towards struggling men of letters which do not always meet with a return of gratitude. During these years more than one of our so-called minor poets was the frequent recipient of bounties remarkable alike for the delicacy of the manner in which they were offered and the comparatively slender resources from which they were drawn. Mr. Dobell's benevolence in proportion to his means was throughout more than munificent. His practice was in accordance with his theory expressed in 'Balder'—

> 'Charitable they
> Who, be their having more or less, *so* have
> That less is more than need, and more is less
> Than the great heart's goodwill.'

Simple to the verge of austerity in his own life, charity was his one extravagance. His favourite answer to any remonstrance on giving or paying 'too much' was a quotation from Tennyson's 'Enid'

> 'You will be all the wealthier, cried the Prince.'

This benevolence was, as may be supposed, frequently abused, but neither extortion nor ingratitude availed to sour the disposition of the giver. His kindness did not confine itself to pecuniary aid: in the case of all rising aspirants to literary fame, a class the most difficult to deal with, his advice and encouragement were as ready as his substantial aid. Among the worthiest of those who were

deeply indebted to this poet's criticism and counsel we may mention the short-lived and precocious David Gray of Merklands. One of Mr. Dobell's happiest acts of benevolence was the generous zeal which resulted in the early sheets of 'The Luggie' being placed in the author's hands shortly before his death. About a year before his own death, he left his room, to which he was confined during the greater part of the day, to revise the manuscript of a literary friend whose obligations to his suggestions are indefinite.

Towards the close of the poet's residence in Edinburgh his health began to give way, his originally strong constitution having been impaired by hard work and anxiety. His chest had suffered by the delivery to the members of the Philosophical Institution of a lecture, remarkable for its comprehensive view of the subject, on the Nature of Poetry. Advised to seek a milder climate, he spent the winters of the four following years at Niton in the Isle of Wight. The house he there occupied was so exposed to the waves that it has since been removed, and the situation may have suggested some of the most striking of the sonnets and other occasional pieces which at this time were his sole contributions to literature. His summer residence was at Cleeve Tower and other 'coignes of vantage' in the Cotswolds. The following notes, condensed from the reminiscences of an intimate and appreciative friend, which we have permission to insert, find here their proper place :—

'At this time, 1858, regular literary work being forbidden by his physicians, Mr. Dobell, with characteristic

energy, turned his thoughts into another channel of usefulness ; he planned and superintended the organisation of a new and ultimately extensive branch of the business in which, for so many years of his youth, he had actively taken part. In conducting this he was one of the first, if not the first in England, to introduce and apply the system of Co-operation which has since been widely extended. He held that every mercantile firm should be a kind of Commonwealth, in which the advancement of one ensures the advancement of all, and his efforts were always directed towards the realisation of this idea. He wished, moreover, to prove that a poet might be a thoroughly capable "man of affairs," and that the poetic or ideal faculty, rightly cultivated and employed, should assist instead of impeding practical life. It was one of the articles of his creed not merely that a good man of business might be a gentleman, but that in order to be the one in any thorough sense of the word, he *must* be the other. These views, maintained at a time when most people considered them to be visionary, are among the many instances in which the "dreams" of one man in advance of the rest prove the truisms of a later generation. Hence it happened that these years, during which he was withheld from any continuous imaginative or philosophical writing, were fruitful of good work in other ways. All who knew Gloucester were alive to the fact that Sydney Dobell was, in every sense of the word, a good citizen ; his name was identified with every movement in the direction of social, literary, or artistic progress, and with every charitable enterprise in the town

'Increasing delicacy of health rendered it necessary for Mr. Dobell, after the summer of 1862, to spend the winters abroad; in that of '62–'63 his head-quarters were at or near Cannes; in '63–'64 in Spain; in '64–'65, '65–'66, in Italy; the summers of those years were still spent in Gloucestershire. During these journeys, in all of which he was accompanied by his wife, the Poet was constantly gathering fresh historic and imaginative material. His letters of this period show the vivid and warm interest with which he studied the characteristic life, the social and political aspects, of every country with which he became familiar. He acquired new languages rapidly; he spoke and wrote French and Italian with singular facility; after five months' residence in Spain he could converse easily in the native tongue, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. It is scarcely necessary to say how well the author of "The Roman" loved Italy, and he must have exulted in seeing, as achieved facts, the Freedom and Unity of which, in the enthusiasm of youth, he had sung; it is equally needless to say how much he was welcomed by the Italian patriots. The pleasure of his continental sojourns was enhanced by his devotion to music and the fact that he was a student and fine critic of pictorial art. He had a profound admiration for Spain, its noble scenery, its language, certain innate qualities of its people, and he always expressed the strongest faith in a future revival of her ancient glories. But his closest ties were still to his own country, which he loved with an almost excessive patriotism. Though debarred from more massive work, he evinced,

by numerous contributions in prose and verse to current literature, his ardent interest in all relating to her welfare. In 1865 he contributed to the discussion concerning Parliamentary Reform a pamphlet written in the spirit of the liberal conservatism to which he latterly adhered. In this striking brochure, the masculine vigour of which commands the admiration even of those who disagree with its conclusions, he advocates a system of graduated Suffrage and Plurality of Votes in proportion to the status and responsibilities of each voter, a view to which the majority of our great thinkers have inclined.[1]

'During one of his visits to Italy, in the course of a day's excursion to the ruins of Pozzuoli, near Naples, he met with an accident which had serious results. While trying to realise the scene that St. Paul must have looked on when he landed there, Mr. Dobell stepped on a spot where only a thin crust of earth covered an opening into one of the great ancient underground works, through which he fell to a depth of ten or twelve feet. Though nearly stunned by a blow on the back of the neck, he seemed to recover almost immediately, and all injurious effects appeared to subside; but from that time dates the occasional recurrence of distressing symptoms which culminated in the summer of 1866, while he was again stay-

[1] 'It is hard in all causes, but especially in matters of Religion, when voices shall be *numbered* and not *weighed*.'—LORD BACON.

'There being in *number* little virtue, but by *weight* and measure wisdom working all things.'—MILTON.

This is a point on which MILL and CARLYLE meet: perhaps the only one.

ing at Edinburgh, in a definite seizure of epileptiform disease. From the consequences of this severe and prolonged attack, his naturally sound constitution and the simple English country life to which he returned, enabled him to rally. His physicians especially urged "plenty of fresh air," and to Mr. Dobell, who always delighted in manly sports and keenly enjoyed pursuing the natural sciences in the sun and breeze, this prescription was eminently acceptable. As soon as his strength permitted he took exercise, chiefly on horseback, and by degrees it became habitual to him to be out of doors for many hours of the day. 'Rest from all brain-work' was the other condition insisted on, but this was impossible ; the power and sensitiveness which mark the highest order of minds can never have perfect rest in human life. To live without breathing would have been as easy to Sydney Dobell as to live without thinking strenuously.

'During this time, with occasional visits to Clifton in the colder season, during which he benefited by the kind care of the late accomplished Dr. Symonds, formed the acquaintance of the Miss Winkworths and contracted a friendship with Dr. Percival of the College, the poet lived at Noke Place—a small house, beautifully situated on the slope of Chosen Hill, near Gloucester. Here, through the ensuing three years, he enjoyed some intervals of comparative health and strength, too brief to enable him to attempt any continuous literary work. But among his papers belonging to this time, there are many eloquent letters to the current journals on various questions of the day, besides the pamphlet, "Consequential

Damages," suggested by the American difficulty, and the poem called "England's Day."

'In the summer of 1869, while residing during the hot weather in a house on Minchinhampton Common, he met with a second accident, from the indirect effects of which he was destined never to recover. He was trying a recently purchased mare, before allowing the lady for whom it was intended to mount, when the animal, suddenly developing viciousness, after exhausting all efforts to throw her rider, reared and fell over with and on him. When he slowly began to regain the use of his limbs, it was found impossible for him to resume the constant exercise in the open air which had hitherto been the chief means towards his restoration. In 1871 the residence of Noke Place was exchanged for one fourteen miles on the other side of Gloucester, in a beautiful district above the Stroud valley. Barton End House, old-fashioned, ample, homelike, with its gardens and plantations, and its outlook on softly-sloping meadows and orchards and the grey roofs of the near hamlet, was an ideal home for the English poet, to whom this kind of English scenery had always been especially attractive. The last three years of his life were spent here, under the almost constant pressure of disabling weakness. But nothing could dull the keenness of his delight in the natural loveliness by which he was surrounded, the various phases of which, when no longer able to go out of doors, he never tired of watching from his windows. Mr. Dobell continued, moreover, to be earnestly concerned about public affairs, and the results of his mature thought often took

form in prose or verse, on social, artistic, national or international questions of the day. A mass of material for future work remains among his MS. fragments, many of which are, even in their incomplete form, well worthy of publication. His daily life was such as most men of his tameless energy would have found unbearably monotonous; but he lived in an atmosphere of fresh thought, and his keen perception of humour helped to keep around him the flow and stir of healthy human life. To the last he was the most sunshiny of invalids; nothing could exhaust his cheerfulness, nor wear out the sweetness of his patience; his innate brightness and elasticity of mind was strengthened and elevated by spiritual culture into something holier and nobler than mere temperament. But with the spring of 1874 came a train of circumstances which involved for him more than one shock of peculiar pain, and necessitated mental wear and tear of a kind for which he was now absolutely unfit; so that the constitution which had gallantly struggled through so much was vanquished at last.'

The Poet's friend then contributes some pages of general remark, from which we extract the following:—

'He whom some of his critics persisted in identifying with the morbid and dreamy "Balder" was one of the most healthy-minded and sagaciously practical of men; far from being a cynic or misanthrope, he "loved his kind" in no mere theoretic sense; his instincts were pre-eminently social, with nothing of that shy reserve held to be characteristic of his race; he encouraged every opportunity of intercourse with his fellows of whatever class, and whether

it was a labourer breaking stones on the highway, or a cultured fellow-passenger on a journey with whom occasion led to some brief converse, he never departed from one of these chance encounters without leaving an impression of brightness and kindliness not soon to be forgotten. He was free from all those vices, as from all those weaknesses, often held to belong to the artistic life; he burned no midnight oil in pursuit of fitting seasons of inspiration: he loved simple fare and the freshness of the morning. Yet he was too genial to be an ascetic, and amid his own "plain living and high thinking" exercised towards others a generous and refined hospitality. He was a most careful critic, keenly perceiving defects of imagination or faults of style; but penetrating at once, wherever it existed, to the essential excellence of book or picture, sketch or poem, political creed or popular enthusiasm. Many dicta of his so-called Toryism are now accepted by acknowledged Liberals; but his philosophy, political as well as religious, started from a loftier basis, and took "an ampler range" than that which is commonly appreciated by most newspaper and magazine readers or writers. A thinker above all things, he was nevertheless not unskilled in active exercises, seldom so valued by one whose resources are so independent of them. He was expert in riding and driving, and was a good shot, taking great pleasure in rifle-practice long before volunteering made it a fashion; he had a loving knowledge of horses and dogs (his name may be familiar to some, less in connection with books than as the owner of a rare and peculiarly beautiful breed of deer-hounds),

and was keenly interested in hunting and all country sports.

'Mr. Dobell was loved to enthusiasm by all children and young people with whom he came in contact: he had a rare power not only of amusing but of insensibly arousing and elevating their minds. Few who have been privileged to meet him in this relationship will forget the charm of his talk, the kindness of his sympathy, the gentleness of his counsel. His interests being so wide he was singularly free from the tendency—to which deep thinkers are prone—to let one idea override the rest or to be engrossed by one subject to the neglect of others. He could without effort turn his mind from the great public matters to which we have referred, to some simple village incident or affair of domestic import. There was not a cottager within the range of his daily exercise who had not learnt to know the bright face and kindly voice, and few who had not cause to be grateful to the considerate adviser as well as to his liberal hand. Only those who knew him best could estimate the resources of the intellect that was for so many years mysteriously fettered from its fitting work. It may be hoped that among the papers he has left are some treating of the religious subjects which were ever dominant in his mind, and which may evidence in words as he did in life the living Faith, at once deeply reverent and enlightened, in God and Christ, which was never shaken by temptations of the intellect nor weakened by years of suffering and privation.' The fact of Mr. Dobell's belonging to no one of

the recognised denominations suggests the question and the answer of Schiller :

> 'Welche Religion ich bekenne? Keine von Allen
> Die du mir nennst. Und warum Keine? Aus Religion.'

We may here appropriately quote a sentence, found among his memoranda, which seems to us to bear as striking witness to the width of his views as did his whole 'Art zu seyn' to the reality of his convictions. 'Whatever things are true for Man the Immortal I call religion, and, in this sense, religion is the only worthy object of Human Study.'

A few words are all that, in anticipation of a fuller biography, it seems needful here to add to these notes.

Latterly Mr. Dobell's attacks of illness to some slight extent affected his memory, but he remained till within two or three weeks of his death in the full possession of his other intellectual powers, drawing round him, by the charm of his presence, a small circle of devoted friends, and enlisting the love and gratitude of all with whom he came in contact, by unostentatious but ever active beneficence. At the last, his disease assumed an acuter form and he passed through the cloud-land of delirium to his rest: without a murmur spent on broken hopes and noble ambitions so largely wrecked; in his own words, 'trusting not God the less for an unanswered prayer.' 'Vir pietate egregius, valde deflendus amicus.'

Mr. Dobell's true place among the English Poets of this century seems to us, in spite of manifest faults which critics will variously estimate, to be a high and permanent one. He belonged to the spasmodic school, with which

he was, during his residence in Edinburgh, topographically associated, in virtue of defects shared with men indefinitely his inferiors. Of these the chief were, occasional violences and frequent involutions of expression, recalling the conceits of Donne and others of the so-called metaphysical School of the seventeenth century; a tantalizing excess of metaphor, a deficient sense of artistic proportion, and a weakness, latterly outgrown, for outré 'fine things.' But from the graver intellectual and moral offences of the galvanic, finical and later sentimental schools, from their subordination of sense to sound, their 'bubbles blown from minds incompetent,' their scorn of study and consequent ignorance, their egotistical disregard of all beyond themselves and their art, he was wholly free. Though unequal, his verse at its best is in strength and delicacy seldom surpassed by that of any of his contemporaries: his imagery, though redundant, is remarkably original and incisive. But the great merit of his work is that it is steeped in that higher atmosphere towards which it is the aim of all enduring literature to raise our spirits. His most attractive and in this age most *distinctive* quality as an author is the freshness of thought and depth of sympathy with the nobler aspirations of our nature—only possible to noble souls—and which endeared him to all who were privileged to enjoy his society. The charm of Mr. Dobell's conversation has been often remarked: few brilliant talkers have had at their command a greater variety of unexpected illustrations: few trained metaphysicians have exhibited acuter reasoning power. In

close argument—during which he was ready to listen as well as to assert—he found few masters. On the other hand his victories did not always carry conviction; for his love of analysis led him, even when dealing with themes of every-day life, into super-subtle distinctions. His real fascination lay in the incommunicable beauty of a character in which masculine and feminine elements, strength and tenderness, were almost uniquely blended. Manliness in its highest attributes of courage, energy, and independence pervaded his life. It often occurred to us that Mr. Dobell would have made a great general; he was absolutely without fear, and being under all circumstances perfect master of himself, was pre-eminently fit to master and command others. Pure without pedantry, he had the 'scorn of scorn' for every form of falsehood; but the range of his charity was limited only by his love of truth. The sense of humour, comparatively absent from his writings, showed itself in the delicate irony of his rare rebukes. His loyalty to friendship—that half-forgotten virtue of an earlier age—has never been surpassed. He was chivalrous to an extreme, and this sometimes led his judgment astray on behalf of fallen causes, with a touch of lofty yet gracious mannerism which recalled the ideal of a Castilian knight. A radical reformer in some directions, he had little sympathy with the extreme phases of democracy, and held the tyranny of mobs and autocrats in equal aversion. Like those of most poets, his theoretical politics had a visionary side: but he was far from being a mere dreamer. Of practical well-doing towards the poor, of encouragement to the young

and all who were struggling for a recognition of their merits, he was never weary: for of the jealousy which is one of the main blots of our literature, he had not a tinge. He could afford to be generous: and to almost all with whom he came in contact, grateful or ungrateful, he had done some kindnesses. His criticisms on men, books and systems, if not always sound, were invariably valuable: everything he said was so suggestive that he awoke in his listeners a consciousness of new capacities as well as of new duties. His hospitality was bestowed under guise of receiving a favour. His house was full of 'sounds and sweet sights that give delight and hurt not.' To live with him a few days was to breathe a serener air. 'To know him was a liberal education.' An old chronicler writes of Sir Philip Sidney: 'It pleased God that he should be born on earth as a sample of ancient virtue.' His friends will be pardoned for venturing to apply these words to Sydney Dobell.

J. N.

THE ROMAN.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

NOTE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION OF 'THE ROMAN.'

THAT I suffer this Second Edition to go forth without the customary revision and correction, requires, in modesty, a word of explanation.

Of the faults of the book I am fully conscious. I knew them when it went to press, I never forgot them in the applause of a generous reception, and if I ever look into it again they will, doubtless, be additionally offensive.

But I did my best in 1849; and in 1852 I will not alter what was done. Whether I can yield purer poetry at eight and twenty than when I wrote 'The Roman' at twenty-five, my readers may in due time have occasion to consider; but—classic authority to the contrary notwithstanding—I hold that to beautify the work of that day by passing some of its members through the mind of this, were to borrow the expedient of that ambitious artisan, who recast the limbs of Cupid in the mould of Psyche.

What I have written I have written. The words 'Dramatic Poem' in the Title are not mine. 'Poetry' and 'A Poem' are not necessarily æquipollents. In the next few years I hope to write more 'Poetry;' ten years hence, if God please, A POEM.

S. Y.

FEB. 1852.

THE ROMAN.

SCENE I.

A PLAIN IN ITALY—AN ANCIENT BATTLE-FIELD.
TIME, EVENING.

Persons.—VITTORIO SANTO, *a Missionary of Freedom. He has gone out, disguised as a Monk, to preach the Unity of Italy, the Overthrow of Austrian Domination, and the Restoration of a great Roman Republic.*——*A number of Youths and Maidens, singing as they dance.* '*The Monk*' *is musing.*

Enter Dancers.

Dancers. Sing lowly, foot slowly, oh why should we chase
The hour that gives heaven to this earthly embrace?
To-morrow, to-morrow, is dreary and lonely;
Then love as they love who would live to love only!
Closer yet, eyes of jet,—breasts fair and sweet!
No eyes flash like those eyes that flash as they meet!
Weave brightly, wear lightly, the warm-woven chain,
Love on for to-night if we ne'er love again.

Fond youths! happy maidens! we are not alone!
Bright steps and sweet voices keep pace with our own.
Love-lorn Lusignuolo, the soft-sighing breeze,
The rose with the zephyr, the wind with the trees.
While Heaven, blushing pleasure, is full of love-notes,
Soft down the sweet measure the fairy world floats.

The Monk advances, meets the Dancers, and points to the turf at their feet.

The Monk. Do you see nothing there,
There, where the unrespective grass grows green,
There at your very feet? Nay, not one step!
'Twould touch it! 'twould profane it! Palsied be
The limb that treads that ground! There is a grave—
There is a grave;—I saw it with these eyes—
A grave! I saw it with these eyes! It holds—
It holds—oh Heaven!—MY MOTHER!

One of the Revellers. Peace, good Padre,
Look to thy beads. The turf is level here.
Comrades! strike up! 'Sing lowly, foot——

The Monk. Who steps,
Steps first on me. I say there is a grave,
I say it is my mother's: that I loved her,
Ay, loved her with more passion than the maddest
Lover among ye clasps his one-day wife!
And I steal forth to keep my twilight vigil,
And you come here to dance upon my heart.
You come and—with the world at will for dalliance,
The whole hot world—deny me that small grave

Whose bitter margin these poor knees know better
Than your accustom'd feet the well-worn path
To your best harlot's bower. The turf is fair!
Have I not kept it green with tears, my mother?
You lustful sons of lax-eyed lewdness, do you
Come here to sing above her bones, and mock me,
Because my flesh and blood cry out, 'God save them?'
May the Heaven's blight——

One of the Revellers. Nay, holy father, nay,
We would not harm thee. Be it as thou wilt.
Holy Madonna! there is little dust
In this old land, but has been son or mother
In its own day. What ho! my merry friends,
Come, we must dance upon some other grave.
Farewell, good father!

Another Reveller. Save you, father!

Another. Think not,
We would insult thy sorrow.

The Monk. Well, forgive me.
I pray you listen how I loved my mother,
And you will weep with me. She loved me, nurst me,
And fed my soul with light. Morning and Even
Praying, I sent that soul into her eyes,
And knew what Heaven was though I was a child.
I grew in stature, and she grew in goodness.
I was a grave child; looking on her taught me
To love the beautiful: and I had thoughts
Of Paradise, when other men have hardly

Look'd out of doors on earth. (Alas! alas!
That I have also learn'd to look on earth
When other men see heaven.) I toil'd, but ever
As I became more holy, she seem'd holier;
Even as when climbing mountain-tops the sky
Grows ampler, higher, purer as ye rise.
Let me believe no more. No, do not ask me
How I repaid my mother. O thou saint,
That lookest on me day and night from heaven
And smilest, I have given thee tears for tears,
Anguish for anguish, woe for woe. Forgive me
If, in the spirit of ineffable penance,
In words, I waken up the guilt that sleeps.
Let not the sound afflict thine heaven, or colour
That pale, tear-blotted record which the angels
Keep of my sins. We left her. I and all
The brothers that her milk had fed. We left her—
And strange dark robbers, with unwonted names,
Abused her! bound her! pillaged her! profaned her!
Bound her clasped hands, and gagg'd the trembling lips
That pray'd for her lost children. And we stood
And she knelt to us, and we saw her kneel,
And look'd upon her coldly and denied her!
Denied her in her agony—and counted
Before her sanguine eyes the gold that bought
Her pangs. We stood——

One of the Revellers. Nay, thou cowl'd ruffian! hold!
There's vengeance for thee yet! Dost thou come here

To blast our hearing with thy damned crimes?
Seize on him, comrades, tear him limb from limb!

The Monk. Yes, seize him! tear him! tear him! he will bless thee
If thy device can work a deeper pain
Than he will welcome and has suffer'd. Tear him!
But, friends, not yet. Hear her last tortures. Then
Find, if ye can, some direr pang for me.
The Robbers wearied, and they bade us hold her,
Lest her death-struggles should get free. She look'd
Upon me with the face that lit my childhood,
She called me with the voices of old times,
She blest me in her madness. But, they show'd us
Gold, and we seized upon her, held her, bound her,
Smote her. She murmur'd kind words, and I gave her
Blows.

One Auditor. Fiend!

Another. Hound!

Another. Demon!

Another. Strike him!

Another. Hold him down!

Kill him for hours!

The Monk. Why how now, countrymen?
How now, you slaves that should be Romans? Ah!
And you will kill me that I smote my mother?
Well done, well done, a righteous doom! I smote
My mother? Hold! My mother, did I say?
My mother? Mine, yours, ours!

One Auditor. Seize him.

All. Die, liar!

Die.

The Monk. But my brothers—will you seize my brothers?

What! will you let that cursed band escape
That hoard the very gold that slew her? Make
A full end. Finish up the work. You cowards!
What! you can pounce on an unarm'd poor man,
But tremble at the gilded traitors!

All. Name them!

They shall die! Point them out! where are they?

The Monk. HERE!

You are my brothers. And my mother was
Yours. And each man among you day by day
Takes, bowing, the same price that sold my mother,
And does not blush. Her name is ROME. Look round,
And see those features which the sun himself
Can hardly leave for fondness. Look upon
Her mountain bosom, where the very sky
Beholds with passion: and with the last proud
Imperial sorrow of dejected empire,
She wraps the purple round her outraged breast,
And even in fetters cannot be a slave.
Look on the world's best glory and worst shame.
You cannot count her beauties or her chains,
You cannot know her pangs or her endurance.
You, whom propitious skies may hardly coax

To threescore years and ten. Your giant fathers
Call'd Atlas demigod. But what is she,
Who, worn with eighteen centuries of bondage,
Stands manacled before the world, and bears
Two hemispheres—innumerable wrongs,
Illimitable glories. Oh, thou heart
That art most tortured, look on her and say
If there be any thing in earth or heaven,
In earth or heaven—now that Christ weeps no longer—
So most divinely sad. Look on her. Listen
To all the tongues with which the earth cries out.
Flowers, fountains, winds, woods, spring and summer incense,
Morning and eve—these are her voices—hear them!
Remember how, in the old innocent days
Of your young childhood, these sang blessings on you.
Remember how you danced to those same voices,
And sank down tired, and slept in joy, not doubting
That they would sing to-morrow; and remember
How when some hearts that danced in those old days,
And worn out laid them down, and have not waken'd,
Gave back no answer to the morning sun,
She took them to her mother's breast and still
Holds them unweary, singing by their slumbers,
And though you have forgotten them remembers
To strew their unregarded graves with flowers.
Oh those old days, those canonizèd days!
Oh that bright realm of sublunary heaven,

Wherein they walk'd in haloes of sweet light,
And we look'd up, unfearing, and drew near
And learnt of them what no succeeding times
Can tell us since of joy;—for so, being angels,
They suffer'd little children. Oh those days!
Why is it that we hear them now no more?
And the same destiny that brought us pangs
Took every balsam hence? Did we wake up
From infancy's last slumber in a new
And colder world? My mother, thou shalt answer!
I hear thee—see thee. The same soul informs
The present that look'd once through undimm'd eyes
In Childhood's past. What though it shines through tears?
It shines. What though it speaks with trembling lips,
Tuned to such grief that they say bright words sadly?
It speaks. And by that speech thou art the mother
That bore us! Oh you sons of hers, remember
When joy had grown to passion, and high youth
Had aim'd the shafts that lay in Childhood's quiver,
If you have ever gone out, (and each Roman
Heart must have note of one such better day,)
Full of high thoughts, ambitions, destinies,
And stood, downcast, among her ruin'd altars,
And fed the shameful present with the past;
And felt thy soul on the stern food grow up
To the old Roman stature: and hast started
To feel a hundred nameless things, which Kings

Call sins,—and Patriots, virtues: and self-judged,
Conscious and purple with the glorious treason,
Hast lifted flashing eyes, bold with great futures,
And in one glance challenged her earth, seas, skies,
And they have said, 'WELL DONE.' And thou hast felt
Like a proud child whom a proud mother blesses.
Ah! your brows kindle! What! I have said well?
What! there are some among you who have been
The heroes of an hour? you men of Parma,
What! you were Romans once! you worse than slaves,
Who, being Romans once, are men of Parma!
Tried on the Roman habit, and could wear it
But a short hour on your degenerate limbs!
Sons of the empress of the world, and slaves
To powers a Roman bondman would not count
Upon his fingers on a holiday!
Do not believe me yet. She is no mother,
Who has but nursed your joy and pride. Remember,
If thou hast ever wept without a heart
To catch one tear, and in the lonely anguish
Of thy neglected agony look'd out
On this immortal world, and seen—love-stricken—
Light after light her shadowy joys take up
Thy lorn peculiar sorrow, till thy soul
Seem'd shed upon the universe, and grief,
Deponent of its separate sadness, clung
To the stupendous dolour of all things,
And wept with the great mourner, and smiled with her

When she came back to sunshine—with the joy
Of a young child after the first great grief
Wherein a mother's holy words first spake
To the young heart of God. But I am dreaming;
You have not wept as I have. Yet remember,
If she hath shown you softer signs than these—
If there are none among you who have given
To her chaste beauty, to the woods and mountains,
And lone dim places, sorrowfully sweet,
Where love first learns to hear himself, and blush not—
Thoughts which you would deny me at confession,
Thoughts which, although the peril of a soul
Hung on their utterance, would have gone unborn
In silence down to hell, unblest, unshriven,
And, in despairing coyness, daring all,
Because they could dare nothing. Like the shy
Scared bird, to which the serpent's jaws are better
Than his rude eyes. And yet you gave them to HER,
And these same trembling phantasies went forth,
To meet the storms that shake the Apennines,
And did not fear. And so you call'd her MOTHER,
And so the invisible in you confest
The unseen in her; and so you bore your witness
To her august maternity, and she
Reflected back the troth. Remember, *so*
Great Romulus and those who after him
Built the Eternal City, and their own
Twin-born eternity—even as the workman

Is greater than the work—stood at her knee,
And brighten'd in her blessing; and remember
If they were sons like you! What! can dead names
Stir living blood? Fear not, my countrymen!
They are not German chieftains that I spoke of.
Tremble not, brethren, they are not our lords.
Our lords! they conquered men. They are some souls
That once took flesh and blood in Italy,
And thought it was a land to draw free breath in,
And drew it long, and died here; and since live
Everywhere else. What! your brows darken! what!
I wrong'd you foully; 'twas no fear that daubed them:
What! your cheeks flush as some old soldier's child,
Glows at inglorious ease when a chance tongue
Speaks of the triumph where his father fell!
What then! these dead are yours! Men, what are they?
What are they?—ask the world and it shall answer.
And *you?* True, true, you have your creed; you tell me
That twice a thousand years have not outworn
The empire in that blood of theirs that flows
In your dull veins. You tell me you are Romans!
Yet they were lords and you are slaves; the earth
Heard them and shook. It shakes, perchance, for you;
Shakes with the laugh of scorn that there are things
Who lick the dust that falls from Austrian feet,
And call the gods their fathers! Bear with me,
I am not here to reckon up your shames,
I will know nothing here but my wrong'd mother.

I cry before heaven she is yours. That you
May kill me for the part I bore, and then
Do judgment on yourselves. Look on that mother
Whose teeming loins peopled with gods and heroes
Earth and Olympus—sold to slaves whose base
Barbarian passions had been proud to swell
In death a Roman pageant. Every limb
Own'd by some separate savage—each charm lent
To some peculiar lust. The form that served
The world for signs of beauty, parcell'd out
A carcase on the shambles, where small kings,
Like unclean birds, hang round the expected carrion,
And chaffer for the corpse which shall not die!
Look on that mother and behold her sons!
Alas, she might be Rome if there were Romans!
Look on that mother! Wilt thou know that death
Can have no part in Beauty? Cast to-day
A seed into the earth, and it shall bear thee
The flowers that waved in the Egyptian hair
Of Pharaoh's daughter! Look upon that mother—
Listen, ye slaves, who gaze on her distress,
And turn to dwell with clamorous descant,
And prying eye, on some strange small device
Upon her chains. In no imperial feature,
In no sublime perfection, is she less
Than the world's empress, the earth's paragon,
Except these bonds. These bonds? Break them. Un-
bind,

Unbind Andromeda ! She was not born
To stand and shiver in the northern blast,
Or fester on a foreign rock, or bear
Rude licence of the unrespective waves.
She is a queen ! a goddess ! a king's daughter !
What though her loveliness defied the heavens ;
Unbind her, she shall fill them ! Man, unbind her,
And, goddess as she is, she owns thee, loves thee,
Crowns thee ! And is there none to break thy chains,
My country ? Is there none, sons of my mother ?
Strike, and the spell is broken. You behold her
Suppliant of suppliants. Strike ! and she shall stand
Forth in her awful beauty, more divine
Than death or mortal sorrow ; clothing all
The wrecks and ruins of disastrous days
In old-world glory—even as the first spring
After the deluge. Why should we despair ?
The heroes whom your fathers took for gods,
Walk'd in her brightness, and received no more
Than she gives back to you, who are not heroes,
And have not yet been men. They toil'd and bled,
And knew themselves immortal, when they hung
Their names upon *her* altars ; ask'd no fate
But that which you inherit and disdain
To call it heritage—subdued the world,
And with superior scorn heard its lip-service,
And bade it call them ROMANS, and believe
Earth had no haughtier name. Be not deceived.

They stood on Roman, you on Parman ground,
But yet this mould is the same ground they stood on.
The evening wind, that passes by us now,
To *their* proud senses was the evening wind.
These are the hills, and these the plains, whereby
The Roman shepherd fed his golden flocks,
And kings look'd from their distant lands, and thought
him
Greater than they. The masters of the world
Heard the same streams that speak to you, its slaves.
These rocks were their rocks, and their Roman spring
Brought, year by year, the very self-same blossoms,
(The self-same blossoms, but they stood for crowns.)
The flowers beneath their feet had the same perfume
As those you tread on—do they scorn your tread?
They saw your stars; and when the sun went down,
The mountains on his face set the same signs
To their eyes as to yours. O thou unseen
Rome of their love,—immaculate and free!
Thou who didst sit amid the Apennines,
And looking forth upon the conscious world,
Which heard thee and obey'd, beheld thy children
From sea to sea! Yes, we are here, my mother,
And here beside thy mountain throne we call thee.
Ascend, thou uncrown'd queen! Yet a few days,
Yet a few days, and all is past. Behold
Even now, the harvest seedeth, and the ear
Bends rich with death. Yet a few days, my mother,

And thou shalt hear the shouting of the reapers,
And we who sharp the sickle shall ring out
The harvest-home. Nay, look not on me, mother,
Look not on me in thy sublime despair;
Thou shalt be free! I see it all, my mother,
Thy golden fetters, thy profanèd limbs,
Thy toils, thy stripes, thine agonies, thy scars,
And thine undying beauty. Yes, all, all,
And all for us and by us. Look not on me.
Ay! lift thy canker'd hands to heaven, earth hath not
Room for so vast a wrong. Thou shalt be free,
Thou shalt be free, before the heavens I swear it!
By thy long agony, thy bloody sweat,
Thy passion of a thousand years, thy glory,
Thy pride, thy shame, thy worlds subdued and lost,
Thou shalt be free! By thine eternal youth,
And co-eternal utterless dishonour—
Past, present, future, life and death, all oaths,
Which may bind earth and heaven, mother, I swear it.
We know we have dishonour'd thee. We know
All thou canst tell the angels. At thy feet,
The feet where kings have trembled, we confess,
And weep; and only bid thee live, my mother,
To see how we can die. Thou shalt be free!
By all our sins, and all thy wrongs we swear it.
We swear it, mother, by the thousand omens
That heave this pregnant time. Tempests for whom
The Alps lack wombs—quick earthquakes—hurricanes

That moan and chafe, and thunder for the light,
And must be native here. Hark, hark, the angel!
I see the birthday in the imminent skies!
Clouds break in fire. Earth yawns. The exulting thunder
Shouts havoc to the whirlwinds. And men hear,
Amid the terrors of consenting storms,
Floods, rocking worlds, mad seas and rending mountains,
Above the infinite clash, one long great cry,
THOU SHALT BE FREE!

[*The audience have one by one stolen away. The* MONK, *recovering from his enthusiasm, finds himself alone.*

The Monk. Ah solitude! and have I
Raved to the winds? [*A pause.*
Bow not thy queenly head,
Beat not thy breast; they do not leave *thee*, mother!
We have no strength to meet the offended terrors
Of thy chaste eyes. Yet a few days, my mother,
And when the fire of expiation burns,
Thou shalt confess thy children. Oh, bear with us,
Hath the set sun forsaken thee? We know
All that thou art, and we are: and if, mother,
The unused weight of the ineffable knowledge
Bendeth our souls, forgive us. [*Another long pause.*
Yes, *all* gone!
And not one word—one pitiful cheap word—
One look that might have brighten'd into promise!
All faint, pale, recreant, slavish, lost. No cur
That sniffs the distant bear, and sneaks downcast

With craven tail and miscreant trepidation
To kennel and to collar, could slink home
With a more prone abasement. [*Another long pause.*
Kill me! kill me!
Thine hour is not yet come. Then give me mine!
Thou must endure, my mother, I have taken
A meteor for the dawn. Thou must endure,
And toil, and weep.
Oh, thou offended majesty! my heart
Beats here for thee. Strike it! Thou must endure.
I may not, at the peril of my soul,
Give thee aught other counsel; and I would not
For many souls that any man should dare
To give thee this and live. Alas! when truth
Is treason, and the crime of what we do
Transcends all sins but the more damning guilt
Of doing aught beside. [*Another pause.*
Or is it, mother,
That thou hast chosen ill? That I, the dreamer,
Catch not the language of these waking men?
With our humanity infirm upon us,
My God! it is a fearful thing to stand
Alone, beneath the weight of a great cause
And a propitious time! [*Another pause.*
Mother! [*A long pause.*
Be patient,
O thou eternal and upbraiding Presence,
Which fillest heaven and earth with witness; be

What thou hast been: and, if thou canst, forgive
What I can not forgive; and let me be
What I was. Take, take back this terrible sight!
This sight that passeth the sweet boundary
Of man's allotted world. Let me look forth
And see green fields, hills, trees, and soulless waters
Give back my ignorance. Why should my sense
Be cursed with this intolerable knowledge?
Let me go back to bondage. What am I,
That I am tortured to supernal uses,
Who have not died; and see the sights of angels
With mortal eyes? Unhand me, mother! why
Must I, so many years removed from death,
Be young and have no youth? What have I done
That all thy millions look on thee with smiles,
And I with madness? Why must I be great?
When did I ask this boon? Why is the dull,
Smooth, unctuous current of contented baseness
Forbidden to me only? What art thou,
Magician! that who serves thee hath henceforth
No part on earth beside? That I am doom'd—
Am doom'd to preach in unknown tongues, and know
What no man will believe? To strive, and weep,
And labour with impossible griefs and woes,
That kill me in the birth? That I am thus,
That I am thus, who once was calm, proud, happy,—
Ay, you may smile, you ancient sorrows,—happy.
Stay! happy? And a slave? [*A very long pause.*

If I must see thee,
If it must be, if it must be, my mother!
If it must be, and God vouchsafes the heart
No gift to unlearn truth; if the soul never
Can twice be virgin? if the eye that strikes
Upon the hidden path to the unseen
Is henceforth for two worlds; if the sad fruit
Of knowledge dwells for ever on the lip,
And if thy face once seen, to me, O thou
Unutterable sadness! must henceforth
Look day and night from all things; grant me this,
That thine immortal sorrow will remember
How little we can grieve who are but dust.
Make me the servant, not the partner, mother,
Of woes, for whose omnipotence of pain
I have no organs. Suffer that I give
Time and endurance for impossible passion;
Perchance accumulated pangs may teach me
One throe of thy distress. How canst thou think
My soul can contain thine?

SCENE II.

TIME AND PLACE AS IN SCENE I.

FRANCESCA, *a young girl, one of the Auditors in* SCENE I., *has remained hidden among the trees. The Monk, silent, musing.*

Francesca (*musing*). While he yet spake I waited for a pause,
And now, if I could dare to hear my voice
In this most awful silence, it should pray
That he would speak again. You heavens, you heavens,
Lend me your language. This progressive thought,
This unit-bearing speech, whose best exertion
Is but dexterity, the juggler's sleight,
That with facility of motion cheats
The eye, whose noblest effort can but haste
The single ball of phantasy, and make
Succession seem coincidence, is not
For such an hour. Lend me some tongue, you heavens,
Worthy of gods : in whose celestial sense
The present, past, and future of the soul
Sink down as one ; even as these dews to-night
Fall from a thousand stars.
He hears. He turns.
Now, now, ye saints !

The Monk (*turning and perceiving her*). Lady, what
wouldst thou? [*She is silent.*
Child,
What wouldst thou?
Francesca. I have heard thee. Dost thou ask?
The Monk (*pointing to the dancers in the far distance*).
Did *they* not hear? Daughter, persuade me this,
And I will bless thee.
Francesca (*taking a flower from her breast*). Is that
rosebud sweet?
I pluck'd it from a thicket as I pass'd;
One day, perhaps, some cottage plot; but now
Given up to dominance of vulgar thorns,
And weeds of deadlier moral. Yet methinks
'Tis still a rose. Wilt thou receive it?
The Monk. Ay.
Francesca. I am that rose, my father, *so* accept
Me.
The Monk. Child, I will.
Francesca. I have heard much to-night
Of Roman deeds, of sages, and of heroes,
Of *sons* who loved, and *sons* who have betray'd.
Hath Rome no daughters to repeat her beauty,
Renew the model of old time, and teach
Her sons to love the mother in the child?
Was Rome, my father, built and peopled by
One sex? The very marble of your ruins
Looks masculine. In heart I roam about them,

But whereso'er my female soul peers in
—Even to the temple courts—some bearded image
Cries Privilege. Doth Salique law entail
The heritage of glory? Is there nothing,
Nothing, my father, in the work of freedom
For woman's hand to do?

The Monk. The past, that book
Of demonstrated theorems, lies open.
Why seek my poor unproved hypothesis,
When God hath solved for thee? Child, choose thy page.
Here bleeds Lucretia. Rome hath now ten Tarquins
(Ten Tarquins, but we call them dukes and kings).
There, Arria. Many a Pætus lives to-night
Who would have given right joyfully to freedom
The Roman heart that makes a sorry slave,
If Arria would have shown him how to die.
Virginia! Appius—nay, we have no state
Where Appius would have deign'd to be a despot.
But that divine idea incarnate in
Virginia's corse, and teeming in the blood
Which quickening in your Roman ground grew up
A national virginity—*that* glory,
Though it reach up to heaven, may make its footstool
Wherever there is earth enough to die on.
Remember her who——

Francesca. Hear me yet, my father,
And I will light thee to a sterner text

Than thou hast heart to preach from.
Yonder castle
Darkening the hill——
The Monk. Child, the days come when where
The deadliest stronghold of its lordliest keep
Spreads the dank flags, tear-damp, of its most dark
Detested dungeon, thou—*not I*—shalt see
The wild thyme and the bee.
Francesca. Is there nought writ
Of Tullia, who once drove the car of blood
Over her father's corse? Sir, from those walls
My father rules.
The Monk (*after some silence*). Shall Paul stop preaching lest
Eutychus sleep? In the Damascene way
Shall his eyes shut out light from heaven? Not though
It scorch them blind! Truth is a god, my child;
Rear thou the altar, he himself provides
The lamb. The great judge, Truth, who takes thy verdict,
Avenges a false finding though it save
Thy brother's soul. Truth is the equal sun,
Ripening no less the hemlock than the vine.
Truth is the flash that turns aside no more
For castle than for cot. Truth is a spear
Thrown by the blind. Truth is a Nemesis
Which leadeth her belovèd by the hand
Through all things; giving him no task to break

A bruisèd reed, but bidding him stand firm
Though she crush worlds.

Francesca. Master! I would serve Truth.

The Monk (*meditates, then speaks*). Oh Freedom! ruddy goddess of the hill,
Say, from that breezy ledge of genial rock,
Where, yet ere twilight, with thine eastward face
Turn'd to to-morrow's sunrise, thou hast laid
Thy joyous limbs, dew-bathed—which day scarce tames
To sleep—oh say, is this pale dreamer thine?
Go home, poor child, thou hast thy burden; I
Add nothing.

Francesca. Thou canst speak in parables,
Or with stern silence stifle the poor heart
That breathes thy words; but, father, I will sit
Here at thy feet.

The Monk. So does my dog; but do I
Take him to council?

Francesca. Yet thou givest him
To watch thee day and night. Grant me no less.

The Monk. Oh tyrant's daughter, lovest thou Roman thus?

Francesca. Ay.

The Monk (*musing*). Can the heart be less than what it holds?
The fetter'd slave that in his fetters slays
His lord, has strength to break them. Arms that break
Their chains have strength to throw them in the sea.

Perchance I have judged ill. Yes. Unattaint,
Perchance, the Arethusan blood of Rome
Hath coursed the conduit of a tyrant's veins,
And from the fetid entrails of the earth
Springs up Diana's fountain
Soul, soul, soul,
Wilt thou again believe? Are figs of thistles?
Hast thou not tasted of the Dead-Sea fruits?
The clouds are midnight with to-morrow's storm:
Wilt thou launch freedom in a cockle-shell?
What! Patriot, dost thou pay the gold of Rome
For phantom ship to skim aërial waves
Or desert mirage? Bah! what falconer
Shall man this butterfly-hawk? Will that nice beak
Stoop to a bloody lure?
Poor child, poor child,
The feeblest tongue that freemen use will deafen
These ears where every word went bowing in!
These pamper'd ears, born in the purple chamber
Of silken state, these soft voluptuous ears,
Dainty and fancy-fed, that of the tribe
Of many-visaged language, know alone
That bastard and emasculated speech
That does court-embassies. That perfumed minion,
Which runs the powder'd errands of intrigue;
That slave-born slave, that audible obeisance
Which on the silver plate of compliment
Exchanges rotten hearts. That sleek thrice-curl'd

Prim arbiter of vile proprieties,
Whose wax-light days begin and end with fashion ;
That velvet impotent, whose effete passions
Wait smiling the fantastic lusts of kings.

How shall *she* bear the sound when a strong land
In the rude health of freedom shall say *Rome!*
Go home, girl, thou hast nought in me, nor I
In thee.

Francesca. Thy words stand 'twixt my home and me.

The Monk. Hence ! Thou shalt pass them.
Freedom's sentinels
Challenge no feathers.

Francesca. I have heard thy fears,
And fear not. Do the damn'd, my father, shrink
At voice of angel? Shall not the small sense
Of feeblest child sustain the crash of doom?

The Monk. The day is thine.
There was a Greek sage once, who stood in spirit
Sublime beside his outraged flesh and blood,
The only calm beholder. He and thou,
Raw girl! have come into one heritage ;
He in grey hairs, weary and wise, as sage ;
Thou in the flush of unreflecting days,
As woman. With bowed head I stand before thee,
Child ! teach me.

Francesca. Mock me not, oh father, mock
Me not. Is it so great a boon to die?

The Monk. Have what thou wilt—do what thou wilt.

Francesca (*throwing herself at his feet*). He takes me! You Heavens! he takes me. Master, Teacher, Lord!

The Monk. I take thee not.

Francesca. Thou canst not drive me from thee! I see it all! He would even crush the fly
That hums about him. No, my father, no,
I die not thus.

The Monk. *I* take thee not, brave girl,
Thy *Country* claims thee. That great Rome, for whom
Many have *fallen*, but how few have *died*.
That generous country, which, while other lands
Build up their bulwarks of their children's dust,
Of her best sons, in her worst need, asks only
Apotheosis. Dost thou weep to exchange
The mortal for the eternal?

Francesca. Teach me how
To serve her.

The Monk. Pay her tithes of the rich love
That bore thee to her feet. That love which triumph'd
In victory like his of Underwalden,
Who buried in his own unconquer'd breast
Th' opposing spears.

Francesca. Father, I am a poor
Weak ignorant. Thy voice falls on my heart
Like heavenly music, but alas, I know not
What words they sing to it in heaven. I pray thee

Give eyes to this blind trouble in my soul,
Set me some task—nay, do not spare me, master,
Some task at which thy bravest is not brave—
Teach me some lesson, in our woman's language,
Of action and endurance; I will say it,
That thou shalt bless thy scholar!

The Monk. Child! child! child!
Thou art yet young, and foot of babe can do
No sacrilege. But curb these proud beliefs,
There comes a time, when holy bounds o'erstept
May blast thee. Child, freedom hath sanctuaries,
Wherein the chaste hands of her best high-priest
Tremble to serve. Slave! merry smiling slave!
Dancing an hour since to the shameful music
Of thine own chains——

Francesca. Oh father, father, spare me!
Make me her lowest servant——

The Monk. Child, not so.
How should I judge thee? Enoch was the first,
But not the last translated. To both worlds
—The inner and the outer—we come naked.
The very noblest heart on earth hath oft
No better lot than *to deserve*. And yet,
What laurell'd impotent shall show his head
Beside that uncrown'd giant?
No, my daughter,
I think thou hast a place beside the throne.
Behold it near the skies: the golden steps

Of human toil that reach it, and the angels
Ascending and descending. Wilt thou climb?

Francesca. Oh father!

The Monk. Let me breathe thee round the base
Of the celestial steep. I have a task
Such as becomes the neophyte of freedom;
It shall be thine.

Francesca. I clasp thy knees, my father.

The Monk. Brave girl, it is a Tyro's task; a baptism
That will not drown. The very holiday-work
Of glory——

Francesca. May I do no nobler?

The Monk. Hear it.
Go forth at dawn—as they of old, go forth—
Carry nor purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, salute
By the way no man. Through this sad broad land,
Even from the Alps to the three seas, cry out,
'Rome is at hand!'

Francesca. Father, no more?

The Monk. No more.

Francesca. No word of War, Glory, Shame, Tyrants? Nothing
Of this Rome's feature?

The Monk. Did John Baptist know
Whom he foreran? Daughter, thy chains lie there,
Not two hours off. No law forbids thee wear them.

Francesca. Forgive me, father, I am thine, all thine,

But—nay, frown not—what if men tire of this
Strange cuckoo note?

The Monk. Do two hearts hear the cuckoo
With the same beat? Lend me thy lute, dear girl;
There was a song that in my wanderings
I heard in other years. A wayward song
That caught the murmur of the waterfall,
By which I sang it. But no matter. 'Twill
Find its way where the brawny words of manhood
Might be too rude. I would, my poor disciple,
I had some foot more fit than an arm'd heel
To tread the dwelling of thy woman's soul.
And while we commune, daughter,—for alas,
A patriot militant has no to-morrows—
Hear this first lesson. It may be remember'd
When I am not. Stern duties need not speak
Sternly. He who stood firm before the thunder,
Worshipp'd the still small voice. Let the great world
That bears us—the all-preaching world—instruct thee,
That teacheth every man, because her precepts
Are seen, not heard. Oh, worship her. Fear not
Whilst thou hast open eyes, and ears for all
The simplest words she saith. Deaf, blind, to these,
Despair. That worst incurable, perchance
Some voice may heal hereafter, but none here.
For before every man, the world of beauty,
Like a great artist, standeth day and night,
With patient hand retouching in the heart

God's defaced image. Reverence sights and sounds,
Daughter; be sure the wind among the trees
Is whispering wisdom.

Now assist me, lute.

[*The* MONK *sings—recitativo—touching the lute at intervals.*

There went an incense through the land one night,
Through the hush'd holy land, when tired men slept.

[*Interlude of music.*

The haughty sun of June had walk'd, long days,
Through the tall pastures which, like mendicants,
Hung their sere heads and sued for rain: and he
Had thrown them none. And now it was high hay-time.
Through the sweet valley all her flowery wealth
At once lay low, at once ambrosial blood
Cried to the moonlight from a thousand fields.
And through the land the incense went that night,
Through the hush'd holy land when tired men slept.
It fell upon the sage; who with his lamp
Put out the light of heaven. He felt it come
Sweetening the musty tomes, like the fair shape
Of that one blighted love, which from the past
Steals oft among his mouldering thoughts of wisdom.
And SHE came with it, borne on airs of youth;
Old days sang round her, old memorial days,
She crown'd with tears, they dress'd in flowers, all faded—
And the night-fragrance is a harmony
All through the old man's soul. Voices of eld,

The home, the church upon the village green,
Old thoughts that circle like the birds of Even
Round the grey spire. Soft sweet regrets, like sunset
Lighting old windows with gleams day had not.
Ghosts of dead years, whispering old silent names
Through grass-grown pathways, by halls mouldering now.
Childhood—the fragrance of forgotten fields;
Manhood—the *un*forgotten fields whose fragrance
Pass'd like a breath; the time of buttercups,
The fluttering time of sweet forget-me-nots;
The time of passion and the rose—the hay-time
Of that last summer of hope! The old man weeps,
The old man weeps.
His aimless hands the joyless books put by;
As one that dreams and fears to wake, the sage
With vacant eye stifles the trembling taper,
Lets in the moonlight—and for once is wise.

[*Interlude of music.*

There went an incense through the midnight land,
Through the hush'd holy land where tired men slept.
It fell upon a simple cottage child,
Laid where the lattice open'd on the sky,
And she look'd up and said, Those flowers the stars
Smelt sweet to-night. God rest her ignorance!
There went an incense through the land one night,
Through the hush'd holy land when tired men slept;
It pass'd above a lonely vale, and fell
Upon a poet looking out for signs

In heaven and earth, and went into his soul,
And like a fluttering bird among sweet strings,
Made strange Æolian music wild and dim.

[*Interlude.*

A haggard man, silent beneath the stars,
Stood with bare head, a hasty step withdrawn
From a low tattered hut, wherefrom the faint
Low wail of famine, like a strange night-bird,
Cried on the air. He had come forth to give
His dying child, his youngest one, repose.
'Father,' it said, 'you weep, I cannot die.'
There went an incense through the land that night,
Through the hush'd holy land when tired men slept;
It came upon his soul, and went down deep
Deep to his heart, and threw the new-made hay
Upon the coals of fire that ember'd there.
And by the rising flame came pictures fair,
Of old ancestral fields that strangers till,
And patrimony that the spoiler reaps.
Then falls the flame upon the pallet near,
And forward on the canvas of the night,
To the wild father's eye, lights up that landscape
Of love and health and hope which yesterday
The poorest crumbs of the oppressor's feast
Might buy. Oh God! how coarse a crust may be
The bread of life. He breathes the night-balm in,
And breathes it back the red-hot smoke of vengeance!

[*Musical interlude.*

There was a lonely mother and one babe,
—A moon with one small star in all her heaven—
Too like the moon, the wan and weary moon,
In pallor, beauty, all, alas! but change.
Through six long months of sighs that moon unwaning
Had risen and set beside the little star.
And now the little star, whom all the dews
Of heaven refresh not, westers to its setting,
Out of the moonlight to be dark for ever.
O'er the hush'd holy land where tired men sleep,
There went an incense through the night. It fell
Upon the mother, and she slept—the babe,
It smil'd and dream'd of paradise.
Thanks, listener.
I am a sorry minstrel. Had my art
Been echo to the nature in thy face
We had heard nobler strains.
Francesca (*sadly*). Alas! there only
Is thy child false.
The Monk. Ah! sighing still?
Francesca. Dear father,
One more forgiveness! Spirits half cast out
Tear the possess'd and cry. Indulgent master,
Complete thy miracle.
The Monk (*severely*). Hath the possess'd
Faith to be healed?
Francesca. I could do all for love,
Bleed, die for it,—even to the second death—

I could, I would, I *will*—but to give flesh
For marble; to be crush'd out of the earth
By some cold image falling from the clouds!

The Monk. Woman, is this a place for earthly passion?

Francesca. Not passion, no, not passion. Human light
In the stern idol's eyes—a heart, a pulse
To sanctify the embrace—the love that throbs
Belief—Oh master, master!

The Monk. I am patient,
Strange priestess—how long are these mysteries?

Francesca (*pauses*). Sir, they are even now ended. I say not
Whether the fire be out upon the altar,
Or if the holy portals are self-closed
Against unpitying eyes; but—they are ended.

The Monk. Child, I have wrong'd thee.

Francesca. Father, say not so.
They are not wrong'd who have no rights. And what
Have I before thee?

The Monk. More, my daughter, more
Than thou or I remembered. Do the stars
Frown on us? Yet that cloud of wayward wishes
The world sent up at vesper-time hangs now
Fevering the heaven between their eyes and ours.
Daughter, forget my sins. Fond Hector, arm'd,
Smiled a paternity too terrible
Even for a hero's child. The earnest soul
Drawing a sword is warrior cap-a-pied,

And this voice, strife-strain'd, catches ill to-night
The pitch of the confessional. Brave girl,
Canst thou trust twice?

Francesca. Do I trust God the less
For an unanswer'd prayer? Command me, master;
'Twas the Promethean madness that essay'd
To warm a clay heart with celestial fire.
I am content to serve.

The Monk. Nay, tell me all.

Francesca. Not so, my father. No, thou shalt not cross
This threshold. No, thou shalt not stoop so low
As to the lintel of a heart like mine!
Nay, tempt me not. I have received my sorrow,
And am content. The sin was tôo delicious
For feebler retribution. But, oh, once
To bear what I have borne this hour sufficeth
For one life.

The Monk. Thou poor trembling child, be calm.
Truth, partial to her sex, made woman free
Even of her inmost cell; but man walks round
The outer courts, and by the auspices
And divinations of the augur reason,
Knows her chaste will, her voice, and habit better
—With a sure science, more abstract and pure—
Than ye who run by instinct to her knee.
Answer me, child, perchance——

Francesca. Nay, father, nay,

I am not worthy of thine auguries.
I will confess. I fear'd—forgive me, father,
I did fear that as there *have* been who flew
Wild with their own inevitable shadow;
The dark monotony from day to day,
Of words that had no image in my brain,—
Great everpresent names that stand for nothing
In heaven or earth, sounds, awful, awful sounds,
For shapes I cannot see, haunting my ears,
Might drive me mad. Is not a whisper, father,
Fearful at night? Are there not some, my father,
Who have been doom'd to drag a skeleton
Rattling behind them? Oh, you heavens, you heavens,
I shall go mad.

The Monk (*musingly*). Ay, child, those rank weeds, words,
Exhaust the soul.

Francesca. A little love, dear master,
It seem'd to me if I could know and love
—Though afar off—this Rome of which thou speakest,
It would make life of death.

The Monk. Yes, thou must love her,
There must be fire from heaven or hell to burn
Offerings that burnt were incense, but neglected
Pollute the winds. Thou must love Rome, my daughter,
As she loves thee.

Francesca. Oh, can she love me? How,
Oh, tell me how the mortal can win looks

From the eternal? How the daughters of men
Drew angels down? Alas, thou jestest, father,
She—the espoused of ages—how shall I
Woo *her*?

The Monk. Even as thou makest other loves.
Watch her and wait upon her; let her share
Thy morn and eve, and in the sleep of noon
Dream of her. Have no shame to see her by
Thy bed at night, and to undress thine heart
In her sad gaze.

In the dull ways of men
Sitting and walking lonely, let *her* image
Be thy attendant spirit, and interpret
All things into her language. Haply passing
A ruin'd garden, all of broken statues,
Temples o'er-turn'd, sweet haunts of love and pleasance
Defiled and trodden in the outraged earth,
And blossoms like the noon for radiance, trampled
By foul insulting feet: while over all
The appealing music of wronged solitudes,
Of shades deflower'd and sanctities profaned,
Hangs like a dewy exhalation—then
Look up and say, My country!

Wandering through
The lovely ruin, if thy step should strike
On some fair column; prone and moss-interr'd,
Fit for a god to stand on; one of those
That found amid a desert's sands alone,

Should of the wealth of its one witness give
Another tome to history—be reverent,
Tread as thy feet were among graves—and say,
My country !
Or, oh prince's daughter, if
In some proud street, leaning 'twixt night and day
From out thy palace balcony to meet
The breeze—that tempted by the hush of eve,
Steals from the fields about a city's shows,
And like a lost child, scared with wondering, flies
From side to side in touching trust and terror,
Crying sweet country names and dropping flowers—
Leaning to meet that breeze, and looking down
To the so silent city, if below
With dress disorder'd and dishevell'd passions
Streaming from desperate eyes that flash and flicker
Like corpse-lights, (eyes that once were known on high,
Morning and night, as welcome there as thine,)
And brow of trodden snow, and form majestic
That might have walk'd unchallenged through the skies,
And reckless feet, fitful with wine and woe,
And songs of revel that fall dead about
Her ruin'd beauty—sadder than a wail—
(As if the sweet maternal eve for pity
Took out the joy, and, with a blush of twilight,
Uncrown'd the Bacchanal)—some outraged sister
Passeth, be patient, think upon yon heaven,
Where angels hail the Magdalen, look down
Upon that life in death and say—My country !

SCENE III.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF MILAN, DURING A POPULAR EMEUTE.

A great band of Insurgents, armed, and singing, pass over. The MONK *stands near.*

All (*chanting as they march*). Who would drone on in a dull world like this?
Heaven costs no more than a pang and a sigh;
Dash off the fetters that bind us from bliss,
Fair fall the freeman who foremost shall die!
Death's a siesta, lads, take it who can!
Wave the proud banners that wave for Milan!

Chanted in song, and remember'd in story,
Sunk but to rise—like the sun in the wave—
Grandly the fallen shall sleep in his glory,
Proudly his country thall weep at his grave,
And hallow like relics each clod where there ran
The blood of that hero who died for Milan!

Holy his name shall be, blest by the brave and free,
Kept like a saint's day the hour when he died!
The mother that bore him, the maid that bends o'er him,
Shall weep, but the tears shall be rich tears of pride.

Shout, brothers, shout for the first falling man,
Shout for the gallant that dies for Milan!

Long, long years hence by the home of his truth,
His fate, beaming eyes yet unborn shall bedew,
Beloved of the lovely, while beauty and youth
Shall give their best sighs to the brave and the true!
On, spears! spur, cavaliers! Victory our van,
Fame sounds the trumpet that sounds for Milan!

[*They pass*; *the* MONK *steps forth, and stopping some of the rearguard, speaks.*

The Monk. Would you know
The path of that false tyrant, who enslaved
Your fetter'd land: and, with her outraged beauties
Beaming upon you, made ye glad to die?

Soldier. Ay, holy father.

The Monk. Would you know the spot
Where, in the shoutings of his maniac triumph,
He calls his blood-hounds round his gory hands,
And cheers them on the prey?

Soldier. Since the noon-sun
Shone on the flying Austrians, we have track'd them,
And burn to sup as we have dined. Speak on.

The Monk. If I could count you man by man, and horse
By horse, and bayonet by bayonet,
And point the very lurking place—

Soldier. Nay, speak!

The sun sinks, and Milan herself goes down
With to-night's dews. Speak, speak, good father.

The Monk. Fools!
What! do you take me for some Austrian trull,
At service of the first camp follower
That sues her? Do you think I make my council
Of way-side danglers? Dost betray me, fellow?
Thou pale-faced German knave, if thou art aught
That man may name unblushing, hence and bring me
The leaders of this crew.

One Soldier to another. Go fetch the captain
Of the tenth troop.

The Monk. Friend, fetch ten thousand captains,
And march them here to march them back again;
What! dost thou think Milan's great doom is meat
For mouths like thine? Hence, bring your general,
And bid him—as he values absolution
For all that army of unshriven souls
That hope to make their beds in Paradise—
Appear with such attendance as befits
The majesty of freedom. Hence, and tell him
I can show where Milan's great foe is flagrant,
And swear upon my priestly faith, this night
He shall behold him! [*Exit a soldier.*

Enter General and crowd of troops.

General. Sir, and reverend father,
Thou wilt forgive me if I am deceived—

A straggler of our army brought—but now—
An imminent commandment. Was it thine?

The Monk. Mine.

General. We do trust thou hast not wrong'd us, father:

Each passing moment that goes by us now
Is full of lives.

The Monk. I have not wrong'd you. Hear me.
You say you combat for your country—mine,
Yours, every man's in whom the proud high blood
Of the old time still struggles with the present,
And throbs and blushes at degenerate days:
The country of the Cæsars, and the saints,
And, better still, the land of stirring deeds,
Done by rude hands, and heads as yet uncrown'd
In earth or heaven; the lady of the kingdoms—
The soil on which the gods came down, confounding
Their heaven with ours;—restore me if I wander
From your own words—you strike for this dear country?

All. Die for it!

The Monk. And the tide that flowed from those
Old Roman veins like empire, so that where
The Roman bled he ruled—the blood that soak'd
His sovereignty into the land he fell on,
Flows in you, and you feel it?

General. Reverend father,
Time hastes—the news—thine oath—we must hence—

The Monk. Peace!

Wilt thou direct my gifts, rebellious child?

[*Turning to the Crowd.*

Say, will you hear me? Will you know the spot
Where the foe lurks I swore to show you?

All. Speak!

The Monk. You feel the pulses of the Roman blood,
You think the masters of the world begot
Kings, and not slaves—you come forth with the same
Looks, passions, sinews, souls and giant hearts,
Which in your sires stood round your ancient heroes,
And lifted them to glory on their shields,
—Those heroes worshipp'd by the startled earth,
Who seeing them above you, call'd them gods—
You know the same grand instinct of vast empire,
You stand upon the same Italian ground,
You stand on that same ground, the same proud people,
And the inheritors of ancient worlds,
Shout for Milan! What! will you pay your lives
To buy a freedom girt by fewer acres
Than your old consuls would have thrown away
Upon a birth-day gift? What, has this land,
This Italy, grown smaller, and lacks ground
For such a temple as it once upbore?
Or in your base hearts, shrunk with shameful days,
Is there no space to build a Roman glory?
Go to! you feebler sons of feeble days,
You that would totter with the very name
By which men call'd your sires! Go to, you pigmies,

Who have no more resource in your dwarf nerves,
To know the squalor of your futile limbs,
Than you have sight or soul or sense to compass
The awful stature of a Roman people !
Why do I speak of glory ? Italy,
This Italy, which in its length and breadth
Scarce served your fathers for a throne to sit on,
Confounds their children with its vast horizon !
And the posterity of those who counted
Conquests by continents, weigh'd out dominion
By hemispheres, and cast a score of kingdoms
As dust to balance the unequal scale,
Wage comfit combats at a carnival !
Coin fatherlands and farthings ; and step out
Their mimic royalties, and make toy princes
Glorious in gilt and gingerbread for kings
At school to play with. Husbandmen in crowns,
Great in the lordship of a Roman field,
Affect the despot, and to trembling townships
Nod sovereignty ; with equal hand create
A constitution, country, and court-cook,
Will loyalties, and point with awful finger
Which hedge and ditch shall bound a patriotism !
While Romans smile, and sons of Cæsar farm
Well pleas'd what Cæsar would have deem'd too strait
To breed his wild boars for a hunting day,
And call it Empire !

Enter fresh crowds of Soldiers shouting.

Soldiers. Long live the republic !
Long live the commonwealth of Lombardy !

The Monk. Long live eternal Rome ! long live that Rome
Which is not dead but sleepeth ! long live Rome !
Men, this is the great year of resurrection !
All who are in their graves shall hear his voice,
And come forth ! That which twenty centuries hence
Lay down a hero, shall rise up a god !
Shout, countrymen ! and wake the graves ; shout, ROME !
REPUBLIC ! RISE !

Many voices. Down with him, down with him. Viva Milano !

General. A hearing, comrades !

Many. Peace ! the General speaks !

General. Priest, at thy peril——

Many. At thy peril, priest !

General. Priest, at thy peril, cease these timeless babblings,
Respect thine oath and life. Show us the foe !

Soldiers. The foe, the foe, the foe——

The Monk. Each silent man,
When I cry Rome ! Each false, base-blooded shouter,
When you cry Lombardy !

Soldiers. Base-blooded ! false !
Base-blooded ! false ! give him a ball in the mouth !

Milan ! Milan ! up muskets !

General. Shoulder arms !

The Monk. Each self-judged helot, pleased to toil, a Goth,
When he might rule, a Roman ! Rome ? Rome ? Rome ?
Bah ! by what witchcraft should you know that name,
You Tuscans, Luccans, Florentines, Sardinians,
Parmans, Placentians, Paduans and—slaves ?

Soldiers. Spear him—a pike, a pike !

Some. Hear the priest !

Others (*with great uproar*). Stone him,
Stone him——

The Monk. I am a Roman. Let some Vandal
Cast the first stone.

SCENE IV.

MOONLIGHT.

FRANCESCA *alone, musing, sitting on a bank beneath trees.* CECCO, *a friend, enters unperceived, at the close of her soliloquy.*

Francesca. I will but live in twilight,
I will seek out some lone Egerian grove,
Where sacred and o'er-greeting branches shed

Perpetual eve, and all the cheated hours
Sing vespers. And beside a sullen stream,
Ice-cold at noon, my shadowy self shall sit,
Crown'd with dull wreaths of middle-tinted flowers ;
With sympathetic roses, wan with weeping
For April sorrows ; frighten'd harebells, pale
With thunder ; last, half-scented honeysuckle,
That like an ill-starr'd child hides its brown head
Through the long summer banquet, but steals late
To wander through the fragments of the feast,
And glad us with remember'd words that fell
From guests of beauty ; sunburnt lilies, grey
Wind-whispering ilex, and whatever leaves
And changeling blossoms Flora, half-asleep,
Makes paler than the sun and warmer than the moon !
Was ever slave so dark and cold as I ?
Ah cruel, cruel night ! the very stars
Put me to shame ! I spur my soul all day
With thought of tyrants, woes and chains, and curse
As oft my pallid and ill-blooded nature,
That will not rage. Oh for some separate slave
To pity every vassal by ! Some tyrant
By whom I might set down of all oppressors
That they are thus and thus ! Oh that some hand,
Oh that some one hand, faint and fetter-wrung,
Would thrust its clanking wrongs before my eyes,
And I could bleed to break them !

And thou ! country !

Thou stern and awful god, of which my reason
Preaches infallibly, but which no sense
Bears witness to—I would thou hadst a shape.
It might be dwarf, deform'd, maim'd,—anything,
So it was thine; and it should stand to me
For beauty. And my soul should wait on it,
And I would train my fancies all about it,
Till growing to its fashion, and most nurtured
With smiles and tears they strengthen'd into love.
But—Santo—this indefinite dim presence
I cannot worship. O thou dear apostle,
Oh what a patriot could Francesca be
If *thou* wert Rome! Oh what a fond disciple
Should his tongue have whose only eloquence
Was praise of thee! To what a pile of vengeance
One look of retribution in thine eye
Were torch enough! Be still, my heart, be still!
Ah wilful, wilful heart, dost thou refuse?
Nay, be appeased—I bid thee silence, lest
Consenting cheeks attest how well thou sayest!
Too late, too late. Nay, do you crave, you blushes,
Escort of spoken passion, to interpret
Your beauties to the moon, which, pale with love
And watching for the never-coming night,
Mistakes them for some rosy cloud of dawn,
And ends her vigil? Heart, have all thy will!
Santo, I love thee! love thee! love thee! love thee!
Santo, I love thee! oh, thou wild word love!

Thou bird broke loose! I could say on and on,
And feel existence but to speak and hear.
Santo, I love thee! Hear! Francesca loves thee,
Santo, I love thee! oh, my heart, my heart,
My heart, thou Arab mad with desert-thirst,
In sight of water!—think upon the sands,
Thou leaping trembling lunatic, and keep
Some strength to reach the well.

Cecco (*approaching*). What voice is this,
That calls upon a traitor?

Francesca. Thou base stranger,
Thou coward spy! one that will call on him,
Though her tongue pay the forfeit! Yes, vile Austrian,
I call him, I,—I, who to save my soul
Would scorn to call upon the milk-eyed saints
That look from Heaven upon your German deeds
And do not blight you!

Cecco (*drawing near*). Sister Roman! well
And timely met.

Francesca. Cecco! thy lips are traitors,
And mouth to German fashions. I believed
The hour I sometime pray'd for, come already,
And thee an Austrian spy.

Cecco. Forgive me that
I show'd my passport at a friendly gate,
Despair is a poor courtier. I may waste
Only so many words as may demand
Assistance, if thou hast it, and if not

God-speed! It wants but three short hours of dawn,
I swore to Santo he should have a Bible
Two hours before his time.

Francesca. It wants three hours
Of dawn—thou sworest he should have a Bible
Two hours before his time—Cecco—

Cecco. Be brief,
For pity. Is there any bold man near
Who has and who dare lend?

Francesca. Be brief, for pity—
Thou sworest he should have — you heavens, you heavens,
What do your clouds hide?

Cecco. I must leave thee.

Francesca (to Cecco, who essays to go: she shows a poniard). Cecco,
Tell me; tell all. Ah Cecco—nay, look here
In the moonlight—saints! I can use it!

Cecco. Strange,
Wild girl, how? know'st thou not as well as I
Vittorio preaching to some Milanese
Who would be patriots if they knew but how,
Spent precious hours in which the German foe
Slipt from the snare? whereat brave Roderigo—
A gallant sword—the greatest libertine
In Milan—seized him. In the castle dungeon
He lies since noon, and with the coming dawn
Dies.

Francesca. Dies, dies,—who dies?—pray you, friend,
say on;
I am not wont to wander.

[*She sinks gently to the earth. Cecco reclines her on a bank and hastens on. After awhile Francesca sits up.*

This is well!
That last waltz spent me. Let me see, what gallant
Danced young Francesca down? Nay, he'll boast rarely!
Yet it seems, long ago—long, long ago.
Such dreamless sleep! Thou melancholy moon,
What! have I caught my death-damp of the dews?
Death,—death,—ah!

[*A long pause; she sits with her head in her hands.*
A gallant sword—the greatest libertine
In Milan?—yes, yes,—Roderigo,—yes—

[*Another long pause.*
He lies since noon—ay, in the castle dungeon,
And with the dawn—No, no, thou pitiless sun!
Thou durst not rise! Oh sea, if thou hast waves,
Quench him! [*Another long pause.*
A gallant sword—the greatest libertine
In Milan.—Ah—the greatest libertine?
Who says I am not fair? Ye gods! I curse you:
Why do ye tempt me?

[*A very long pause. Cecco passes in returning.*

It is over, Cecco;
Cecco, I tell thee it is past, is past.

Santo is free. Look thou that horses wait
Near the east gate by sunrise. At the walls
My mission ends. Doubt not. I am not mad,
I hope I am not. Yet one hour of frenzy
Would take me from this hell to heaven. But, Cecco,
I would not buy oblivion, at this moment,
With a right hand that shakes.
I tell thee, haste!
Gaze not on me! with all the fiends about me,
I have not sat an hour stock-still for nought;
Begone! [*Exit* CECCO.

SCENE V.

THE COMMON ROOM OF AN INN.

Enter, by different doors, a number of Students and Burghers, shouting to each other as they meet and greet.

Each and all. The news? The news? The news?
The news? The news?
One. I've a good tale.
Another. I better.
Another. I the best.
Another. Mine caps superlative.
Another. Hurrah! and mine's
A feather in the cap.

Another. Boys! mine's the bird
That grew the feather.
The first. Hear me for my age.
The second. Me for my honesty.
The third. Me for my beauty!
The fourth. Me for my wit.
The fifth. Me for my eloquence.
The sixth. Me
For all these.
Another. Me for none of them, since naked
Beggars are best arm'd.

Enter GIACCO.

Giacco. Halloo!
All. Giacco! Giacco!
Brave Giacco!
Giacco. Here's a tale, my comrades!
All. Hear him!
One. Hurrah! trust Giacco for a pretty wench
And a good story.
Another. Nay, for certain, Milan
Has no such tell-tale.
Another. Lads! a cup all round,
Giacco does best!
One (*aside*). Pray Mary! he knows mine;
Every good saint! it must be mine.
Some. Now, Giacco!
Others. Attend! attend! attend!

Others. Silence! Now, Giacco!

Giacco. There came a man——

One. Ay, 'tis so.

Another. Very true—
So I say.

Another. Hear him!

Another. Ay, ay, go on, Giacco!

Giacco. There came a man dress'd like a priest——

One. The same.

Another. Yes, 'twas a priest.

Another. Said I not well? ah, ah!
Trust Giacco for a tale.

Giacco. A thin pale man——

One. A pale thin man.

Another. Yes, pale and spare, I say so.

Another. Spare, very spare.

Another. The same! the dogs snarl'd at him
As he were bones.

Giacco. He pass'd down Duomo Street——

One. The very street!

Another. Yes, yes, the place, the place,
The very place—all but the name—good Giacco!

Another. Giacco forgets a little—Yes, yes, Giacco—(*Aside*). My life on it, he means the place I say!

Giacco. Walking down slowly——

One. Yes, yes, walking slowly.

Another. Right, Giacco!

Another. Well done, Giacco.

Another. Ay, I say so;

Oh, 'tis my story!

Giacco. Walking down he enters

A merchant's office hard upon the quay——

One. Wrong, Giacco!

Another. Giacco, thou'rt beside thyself!

Another. Blind Giacco!

Another. Saints and angels!

Giacco. Why, I saw him——

Another. Giacco, thou liest!

Another. Turn him out!

Another. Nay! 'tis flagrant!

All. Turn him out!

Enter a Village Schoolmaster.

Doctor Scio. Men!

Some. Room for the Doctor Scio![1]

Others. Chair for the master, there!

Others. Hats off! the Doctor!

All. Room for the Doctor! Let the Doctor judge!

Take him aside, Giovanni. Tell him all!

Tell him, Giovanni!

Scio (*pompously*). Children agapete!

Well-beloved children! trouble not Giovanni!

For as of old the mild mellifluous beams

Of Cytherea on the Prince of Troy

[1] The reader need not be reminded that *Scio* is but one syllable in Italian.

Stole through the broken pane,—as to Endymion,
Through the crack'd casement of consenting cave,
The star-train'd goddess came; so from these wide
And vomitorial windows, belch'd your tumult
To me transgressing.

Some. Hear him!

Others. Well done, Scio!
Hear him!

One. Oh learning! what a treasure thou art!

Others. Hurrah! Speak, Doctor, speak!

Scio. The labourer
Is worthy of his hire. Friends, what is hire?

All. Wages!

Scio. And when, Sirs, does the fatigate
Pellosseous, son of sudorific toil,
Receive his wage? Is it not, friends, the eve,
The sweet stipendiar eve of Saturn's day?

Burghers (to each other). Didst hear the like? What 'tis to be a scholar!
Scio has my boy—for one.

Scio. And shall we, friends,
Shall we degrade the majesty of Learning
Which I—which I—her infinitesimal
Exiguous representative——

Some. Bravo,
Well said!

Scio. Which I—her representative
Exiguous but unworthy——

Some. No, no, Scio,
No, not unworthy.
Others. Don't be modest, Scio;
Unworthy! bah!——
Others. Give us the other words—
Go on, Scio, 'infinite'——
Scio. I say, my friends,
Shall I, the representative of Learning,
Work first and be paid after, like the plodder
In yonder field? My friends, there was a thing,
A tool, an article, friends, a utensil
Known to our fathers by the sacred names
Poculum, cantharus, carchesium, scyphus,
Cymbium, culullus, cyathus, amystis,
Scaphium, batiola, and now by us
Their children, Sirs, albeit unworthy, call'd
A cup.
All. A cup, a cup, a cup of wine!
Well done, old Scio! hurrah! a cup of wine
Here for the doctor, oh! a cup of wine.

Enter a Stranger, who stands aside. A Burgher bows to him and speaks.

Burgher (*to Stranger*). A stranger?
Stranger. Yes.
Burgher. You come in good time, Sir;
Sir, you're a happy man, I give you joy, Sir;
Sir, these are times!—I take it, Sir, few men
Can gainsay that, Sir,—these are times, Sir, eh?

Stranger. Sir, these are times.

Burgher (*pointing to Scio*). You take me, Sir, I see.
Now, Sir, behold that man. I say, Sir, mark him;
Now, Sir, you see a man, a man, Sir.

Stranger. Sir,
I see a man.

Burgher. Just my idea, Sir,—Sir,
I crave your further knowledge, we are friends—
Saints! how a patriot's eye—between ourselves—Sir,
A patriot's eye finds out the man of the age.

Stranger. There is a nameless something——

Burgher. Sir, you have it;
My own idea, Sir, from a boy—a something
Indisputably something. Yes, a something
As one might say—to speak more plainly—something,
A something, Sir,—something in the set of the ear——

Many shout. Scio—Doctor Scio—Silence! The Doctor! Silence!

Enter LELIO, *a Student.*

Lelio. Here's news, friends!

Many. How now, Lelio?

Lelio. Which man here
Tells the best tale?

Many. I. I. I. I. I. I.

Lelio. Nay, everybody! Write me up a nonsuch!
I can beat everybody. Heroes can
No more.

All. A challenge, lads; what ho! a ring,

A ring, a ring, a ring! Champion, step out!
A ring! a ring!

A Student. Go call thy daughter, hostess,
Here's that will make her honest.

Hostess. Sir?

Student. A ring.

All. Now, Lelio, now, each man that beats thee wins
His bottle.

Lelio. Done. You know the fair Francesca,
Count Grassi's daughter?

All. Are we Milanese?

Lelio. Well——

One. Well?

Another. Well! Nay, if she's well, Lelio,
'Tis no such story!

Lelio. Which man has not seen
Young Roderigo Rossi?

All. Or the sun,
The moon—a star or two—the Duomo—well?

Lelio. Young Rossi and a priest fell out last night.

Several. A priest—a priest—a priest——

One. My life upon it
The fellow knows my story.

Lelio. On this quarrel,
Our gallant Cavaliero dooms his man
To die at day-break.

Many. By the holy pope,
A foul deed—nay, a foul deed.

One (*aside*). Ne'ertheless,
By Heavens I'm glad on't. This is not my story.
My priest was a true patriot.
Lelio. At midnight——
(Count Grassi's child hath a fair face)
Several. At midnight,
Count Grassi's child hath a fair face! Fie, Lelio;
Why what a traitor art thou!
Lelio. Attend, I say!
Bold Rossi's lewdness is a proverb——
Several (*pour badiner*). Hold,
Lelio, for pity—there are bachelors here—
We are not all companions in misfortune!
For pity, Lelio!
Lelio. You that shout for pity,
If you be Pity's followers, do her now
Your best allegiance. Good friends, I, her quæstor,
Claim tribute from you. A few tears will pay it.
Listen. The young Francesca, at the price
Of her fair body, bought the captive's life;
The priest is free. Do not cry out. Young Rossi
Craved instant payment. She in her superb
High loveliness, whose every look enhanced
The ransom, sent him from her, glad to grant
Another maiden hour for prayer and tears.
Francesca wore a poniard. She is now
A maid for ever.
Hostess (*to one standing by*). How is that, Sir?

Student (*aside*). Hush !
Dead !

Several. 'Tis a woful story. Poor Francesca !

Scio. Requiem æternam dona eis Domine !

Several. Amen. Amen.

Hostess (*aside*). Dead ! 'tis against my conscience ;
Dead ! and the Signor Rossi ! why a comelier
Walks not Milan. Dead—nay, I couldn't have done it !
Well, well, there be hard hearts that slight their blessings.
So comely a young man ! The saints preserve me !
Nay, 'twas a sinful blindness.

Lelio. How now, hostess,
Some wine, some wine ; wine, wine.

Several. More wine ; now, Lelio,
Who was this monk ?—

Lelio. Fill up your glasses, comrades,
Sorrow is thirsty fellowship—eh, hostess ?

Several. Lelio—now, Lelio—name, name, name !

Others. This priest,
This lady-killing priest !

Lelio (*to one*). Hast thou forgotten
A dance with Ginevrà at eve ? A priest—

One The same ?

Lelio. The same.

One. Vittorio Santo ? speak !

Another. Santo ?

Another. Vittorio Santo ?

Lelio. What ! Vicenzo
Barnabà ! Ah Tomaseo ! are ye also

Of Nazareth? Well done! tell you my story.

Many. Lelio—hear Lelio—

Others. Hear!

Lelio. It was this Santo.

Dost thou mind, Giacchimo, how, deftly feigning
Sorrows about a grave, he won our ears
And prick'd us on to virtue with the sword
Of our own sympathies? With such shrewd warfare—
Proteus for transformation—Briareus
For head and hands—this strange campaigner carries
The fire and sword of his hot argument
From cot to palace, plain to mountain-top.
The merchant at his ledger, lifting eyes
Bloodshot with lack of sleep—for last night blew—
Sees him beside his desk at close of day,
And thinks the lamp burns dimmer, and believes
The untold loss already. The pale priest,
Opening his silent lips with such an omen
That the faint listener starts, relates how some
Great galleon, gallant on her homeward way—
A floating Ind, mann'd by the pride of Europe—
Storm'd by a scallop fleet of naked pirates,
Bestrews their savage shores, and makes each rock
Arabia. With keen eyes catching the throes
Of his now gasping auditor, the tale
Our stern tormentor fashions so astutely,
That each new fear, enduing, strains it to
Its several shape. Watching each rising hope,

He stings it mad with some especial horror,
And by a track of anguish feels his way
Straight to his victim's heart. In that worst moment
The messenger of doom assumes the angel!
Looks that evangelise, eyes that beam light
Into the soul, till every dead hope glitters
Like a crown'd corpse; a moment's shining silence,
Slow placid words that hurry to a torrent;
Then the gulf-stream of passion! high command,
Entreaty, reason, adjuration;—all
The martial attitudes of a grand soul.
The lavish wealth of infinite resource!
Diamonds thrown broad-cast for denaros!—ay,
That Argosy he spoke of, scatter'd on
The maddest waves of rushing rapid, surging
Headlong through foaming straits, above, below,
Tossing the wealth of kingdoms, hurtles not
With such tumultuous riches as the flood
Of his strange eloquence. And then the scared
And half-drown'd trader—lifting his blind thought
Above the waters, that with sudden ebb
Left him in silence—finds he is alone.
Of all the golden wreck, his struggling soul
Holds fast but this—*Rome* is that glorious galleon,
Now stranded and forlorn: her freight of honours
Strew'd up and down the world, purpling strange snows
And loading cold barbaric winds with incense.
That night, at home, the merchant tells his story,

Wherewith, still later, madam at her glass
Stirs sleepy Abigail. Sweet Abigail,
Still nearer midnight, garrulously coy,
'Twixt amorous Corydon and her warm charms,
Weaves the gauze meshes of the thrice-told tale.
Next morn on 'Change betimes the story stalks
By blind deaf faces, as a spirit might walk
Among the wooden gods of the sea-kings.
The hour of contract over,—the fierce edge
Of morning appetite now turn'd with gold—
Nature appeased, and the commercial soul
In jolly after-dinner complaisance
Relax'd and smiling,—prosperous ears attend
The merchant never weary of recounting.
'Insured, Sir?' 'I fear not.' 'Heyday, heyday,
A sorry venture!' Then the angry hum
Subsiding, all surround the man of facts.
Sage heads shook much that day. Municipal
Grave brains plagued with strange phantoms, never yet
Free of the city, in the sacred gloom
Of shades official, ached, and retched, and heaved,
To throw the incivic innovation off:
And in the pangs of labour crying out,
Betrayed the parentage. So this strange priest
Made his foes preach for him, till all Leghorn
Hung on his lips. With bold incessant presence
Whereto no shrine is sacred, no stern fastness
Strong, no offended majesty majestic,

No sinner excommunicate, no saint
Holy, no Dives rich, no Lazarus poor,
No human heart unworthy—this strange man—
This cowl'd evangelist, that *Monk* is not—
(For he preach'd yesterday that not a bare
Untempled spot, unblest, unconsecrate
On earth, but is sufficient sanctuary
For the best hour of the best life;—no cloud
In any heaven so dark that a good prayer
Cannot ascend,)—this polyglot of prophets,
Roams like a manifold infection, shedding
Through the sick souls of men the strange disease
Of his own spirit. Not an art or calling
Wherein men work'd in peace, but at his touch
Spreads the indefinite sorrow. In the field
Halting the team of early husbandman,
He chides him for the German weeds that choke
The Roman crop of glory; bids him seek
The plough of Cincinnatus, and bring forth
Into the sunshine of the age, that soil,
That old heroic soil whence patriots spring!
Hard by the wondering swain, sequester'd close
By summer elms and vines, the village forge
From cheerful anvil all the long day rings
The chimes of labour. Thence at winter night
Shines to the distant villager the star
Of home; to which the homeless wayfarer,
Trudging with fainting steps the storm-vex'd moor,

Turns hopeless eyes, as to the vestal fire
Of sweet impossible peace. Thereby the priest
Pausing, the sturdy smith suspends his stroke
Before the reverend stranger; who accepts
The homage with such liquidating grace
That the stunn'd peasant, unabsolved of duty,
Renews obeisance. Then the pale intruder
Striding some stool, with hand upon the bellows,
Moves the slack fire, and bids the work go on:
Cursing the slave who stoops for prince or priest
The dignity of toil. To the rough music
Setting strong words, he sends with easy skill
Wrongs, hopes, and duties trooping through the soul
Of the stout smith, and there on his own smithy
Blows the rough iron of his heart red-hot.
Seizing the magic time, with sudden hand
He stamps him to the quick;—'Patriot! the hour
Is come to beat our ploughshares into swords,
Our pruning hooks to spears!' The brand driven home,
The apostle vanishes, lest weaker words
Efface the sign.

A Student. Lelio! dost thou remember——

Lelio. I know thy thought,—the shopman of the vale——

Student. Nay, Lelio——

Lelio. Now I have it—the stout Tuscan,
With wain o'erloaded——

Student. Not he——

Lelio. Ah! the maid
Who sang in German——
Student. No——
Lelio. Stay! she who wore
The cameo victory——
Student. Now hear me, Lelio.
When he saw——
Lelio. What! when meeting country boys
With laurel and acanthus——
Student. No! the saints!
Lelio. True, true, the tale of the parch'd field beside
The aqueduct——
Student. Wrong! Holy Mary!
Lelio. Well——
Student. Peace, I say, Lelio!
Lelio. Sometime hence, dear friend;
I am not weary. 'Twas of the round tower
Of Vesta, whence the epicurean Time,
Fresh from the feasts of Rome, took but the heart,
And all is there but the celestial flame
That consecrated all——
Student. Have thine own way,
But were I Lelio——
Lelio. Tut, I know thy story.
'Twas of the eve when, meeting by the way
An ancient pedagogue, whose thin, time-worn,
And reverend features (whereabout grey locks
Hung lank as weeds), great names went in and out,

Mournfully populous, like olden heroes
Haunting some Roman ruin ; our fierce patriot——
Say I not well ?

Student. Hast thou in truth forgotten
The village priest ?

Lelio. The priest ? *our* priest says little
To alb and stole—whether from shrewd self-knowledge,
Or feeling that all tyrants are familiars,
And that those proud prætorians who subverted
The commonwealth of God would lord it over
An earthly heritage—therefore, good comrade,
Owe us thy tale.

Student. One day——

Lelio. One moment first,
('One day' can spare it). I shall ne'er forget,
When falling in upon a lone wild road
With a fat monk, our patriot, for sheer lack
Of occupation, challenges a war
Of words. Good saints ! a firework by a fountain !
A schoolboy's freak played out with cannon balls
And rotten apples ! As our Santo's lightnings
Through the thick haze of t'other's sanctity
Singed brow and beard, heavens ! how the reverend eyes
(Wrestling with wrinkles and siesta-time)
Did struggle to a stare. And the good man,
Heaving his flesh, buzzed like a portly fly
In thundery weather ; our relentless Santo
At parting gives him for to-morrow's text

The whip of knotted cords that cleansed the temple.
'Preach, priest,' he cries, 'that from these sacred bounds,
This outraged temple ITALY, each Roman
Scourge those that sell the sacrilegious doves
Of perjured peace. O'erturn, o'erturn,' he cries,
'The tables of those German money-changers,
That make this house of prayer a den of thieves.'
Assaulting thus with rude declaim those ears
Dull with the gentle lowings of fat kine
And soft excitements of refectory-bell,
Our Santo leaves him, ere the saint disturb'd,
In doubt of man or demon, could revolve
Upon his axis.

All. Ah, ah! Well done, Lelio!

Lelio. Our friar on this——

One. Why the saints smite thee, Lelio!
Now, Lelio!—Eh? nay, Sirs, as I'm alive
This was my story!

Another. Give thee joy of it,
Old Giacco, 'twas a sorry tale, now mine——

Lelio. Friends! we grow solemn. Wine, I say. A song,
A song.

One. Ay, something loyal——

Lelio. Worthy friends,
We should do well to purify the air
Whereof these tales were made; forced by our lips
Into unwilling treason.

One. Lelio!

Another. Shame!

Lelio. Therefore, my merry boys, I vote a ditty,
A well-affected ditty—nay, some say
'Twas writ by Metternich and Del Caretto,
At Schœnbrun after dinner. Nay, no groans!
Sweet friends, no groans! Nay, hear me, friends.

Shouts from many. Down with him!

Lelio. No Carbonaro——

Many. Down with him!

Lelio. I call it
The triple crown, or the three jolly kings,
The Devil——

Some. Hear!

Some. Hurrah!

Lelio. The Devil——

All. Hurrah!

Lelio. The Pope and the Kaiser.

All. Hurrah! Lelio! Lelio!
True to the backbone still! Up with him, boys!
Chair him! a hall! a hall! now, Lelio, now!
Shout cheerly, man—here's thunder for a chorus!

SCENE VI.

A PLAIN. A COTTAGE.

The Monk (VITTORIO SANTO). *Two Children* (*a Boy and Girl*). *Their Father and Mother* (*both young*) *sit at the cottage door. The Monk draws near.*

The Monk (*aside*). This is the spot. From hence my eye unseen
Commands their cottage. Hither have I fared
Five times at this same hour, and five times learn'd
To love my nature better. Here I stood,
And felt, when passing gales in snatches bore me
Their evening talk, as if some wayward child
Had pelted me with flowers. She is a poet,
Or in or out of metre. Rome must have her.
A mother too, 'tis well; then there is one thing
The poet will serve. Ah! art thou forth to-day,
Thou little tyrant, that shalt rule for me?
My faith! a lovely boy! holy St. Mary!
Hark how he carols out his royalty,
And, born a sovereign, rules and knows it not.
The father must be mine too; he hath bone
And sinew, and—if the eye's gauge deceive not—
A soul as brawny. Heavy deeds demand

Such carriers. I will win or lose this night.
Let me draw near.

[*The Children are sporting. The Girl hides among myrtles, and sings.*

Girl. Whither wingest thou, wingest thou, winny wind;
Where, winny wind, where, oh where?

Boy (*singing*). My sister, my sister, I flit forth to find,
My sister, my sister, the orange-flow'r fair!

Girl. Since thy songs thy soft sister seek,
What wouldst with her? say, oh say.

Boy. Oh, to pat her pearl-white cheek,
And court her with kisses all day!

[*The Child bursts from her hiding place, and the Children chase each other over the plain.*

The Mother. Husband! the music in my soul would chord
Most sweetly with thy voice. Take down thy lute.

The Father. Nay, Lila; bid me not do violence
To this calm sunset. List that golden laughter,
Hark to our children! There is music like
The hour. From each to each the heart can pass,
And know no change.

The Mother. Sing me a song about them,
Kind husband. Sing that song I made for thee,
When once, on a sweet eve like this, we watch'd
As now our joyous babes—I blessing them,
Thou marvelling, with show of merry jest,

How they could be so fair.

The Father. Even as thou wilt,
Dear Lila. If the spirit of these moments
Deem my voice sacrilege, let him forgive
The singer for the poet.

He sings. Oh, Lila! round our early love,
What voices went—in days of old!
Some sleep, and some are heard above,
And some are here—but changed and cold!

What lights they were that lit the eyes
That never may again be bright!
Some shine where stars are dim; and some
Have gone like meteors down the night.

I marvell'd not to see them beam,
Or hear their music round our way;
A part of life *they* used to seem,
But *these*—oh whence are they?

Ear hath not heard the tones they bring,
Lip hath not named their name,
Like primroses around the spring,
Each after each they came.

I should not wonder, love, to see
In dreams of elder day,
The forms of things that used to be,
But *these*—oh whence are they?

Dost thou remember when the days
Were all too short for love and me,
And we roam'd forth at eve in rays
Of mingled light from heaven and thee?

One gentle sign so often beam'd
Upon us with such favouring eyes,
That every vow we plighted seem'd
A secret holden with the skies.

Now sometimes, in strange phantasy,
I think, if stars could leave their sphere,
And won by the dear love of thee,
Renew the constellation here,

And shine here with the tender light
That glinted through the olden trees,
They would come silently and bright,
And one by one, like these.

How can a joy so pure and free
Have sprung from tears and cares?
I have no beauty—and for thee,
Thou hast no mirth like theirs.

Yet with strange right each takes his rest,
Even when he will, on thy fair breast,

Nor doubts nor fears nor prays.
The daisy smiling on the lea
Comes not with kindlier trust to be
Beloved of April days.

I look into their laughing eyes,
They cannot have more light than thine—
But treasured by ten thousand ties,
Mine own I know *thee*, Lila mine.

Wistful I gaze on *them* and say,—
Fond, checking with a doubtful sigh
The pride that swells, I know not why—
These, these, oh whence are they?
[*The Monk draws near.*

The Father. Lila! the same pale priest we saw last eve!

The Mother. Good husband, bid him here. The dust of travel
Tells that his way was weary. Holy Sir,
Will't please you sit with us? The herds are milk'd.
Our bread is brown, but honest.

The Monk. Do not ask me.
Are you not happy?

The Wife. *Happy!* reverend father?
We thank God, and say yes. This day five years
One whom I saw for the first time, through tears,

Came with the flowers. When they began to fade
How my heart sicken'd! But God call'd him not
With them. And though the snows of winter came
He stayed, and held enough of summer with him
To fill my house. Should I not be most happy?
Look on my boy, my merry one! Good father,
Which of the angels do they miss in heaven?
Ofttimes at mass I press him close, and tremble
To the sweet voices, lest at 'in excelsis'
He should remember, and go back.

The Monk. Oh mother,
That art, and art not, kind! 'Tis a brave boy.

The Mother. And then he is so gentle and so fond,
And prattles to me sometimes in strange wisdom,
And asks of me in such sweet ignorance,
That teaching him I weep; oft, oft, for joy,
But oft for very grief, that each task leaves
One tiny question less.

The Monk. 'Tis a sweet child.

The Father. Sir Priest, thou knowest well how poor an image
A mother's love will idolize; but this
Dear boy hath put a woman's heart in me,
He is so good, so dutiful——

The Mother. And yet
When he kneels by me at his innocent prayer,
Oft I look down and feel that I have need
To learn of him.

The Monk. Let me bless him.

The Father. My son,
The priest would bless thee on thy birth-day; boy,
Come bend thee at his knee.

The Monk. Thou little child,
Thy mother's joy, thy father's hope—thou bright,
Pure dwelling where two fond hearts keep their gladness-
Thou little potentate of love, who comest
With solemn sweet dominion to the old,
Who see thee in thy merry fancies charged
With the grave embassage of that dear past,
When they were young like thee—thou vindication
Of God—thou living witness against all men
Who have been babes—thou everlasting promise
Which no man keeps—thou portrait of our nature,
Which in despair and pride we scorn and worship—
Thou household-god, whom no iconoclast
Hath broken,—if I knew a parent's joys,
If I were proud and full of great ambitions,
Had haughty limbs that chafed at ill-borne chains,
If I had known a tyrant's scorn and felt
That vengeance though bequeathed is still revenge,
I would pray God to give me such a son!
Therefore, thou little one, mayst thou sleep well
This night: and, for thy waking, may it be
Where there are neither kings nor slaves. Of all
Thy playmates, mayst thou be the first to die——

The Mother shrieks. Ah! holy father!

The Monk. Smitten in the bud
Mayst thou fade on the stalk that had no thorns
To save thee from the spoiler—mayst thou——

The Mother. Mercy!

The Father. Fiend! murderer!

The Monk. Did you not bid me bless him?

The Mother. My boy! my happy one! my bright-eyed babe!

The Father. Thou hooded demon! thou hell-priest!

The Monk. Be patient.
I will take off the blessing; but hear me,
And you shall bid me pray for it again.

The Mother. Blessing? 'Tis blessing to behold him smile
With his bright, innocent, unconscious eyes,
Which thou wouldst close for ever!

The Monk. Is that blessing?
Too happy mother! how thou lov'st to weep!
Come hither, child. Nay, daughter, tremble not!
He is a Roman, and can fear no man—
A child, and dreads not death.
'Tis the purblind
Dim sense of after years that makes our monsters.
The earth hath none to children and to angels.
Eyes weak with vigil, sear'd with scalding tears,
Betray us, and we start at death and phantoms
Because they are pale. And the still-groping heart
Incredulous by over much believing—

Walking by sight dreads the unknown, and clings
Even to familiar sorrow, and loves more
The seen earth than the unseen God.
Ay, bright one,
Climb near the lips that speak of death. The word
Falls on the sunshine of thy face and casts
No shadow. Thou dost play among the flowers
Morning and even, and the selfsame wind
Fosters and scatters them. Why shouldst thou fear?
Twine thy young arms, thou little budding vine,
Round the old barren oak; 'tis sweet to love thee,
Too sweet. I look upon thy brow of promise,
And see it in the future like some cloud
Uprising from the distant hills, that seemeth
To bear up heaven. This may do more. Contain it.
Contain it and the things which heaven and earth
Cannot contain. In thine unsullied eyes,
Not made for tears; in thy bright looks, sweet boy,
Wherein the blush yet sleeps which sights of shame
Shall call there, till the weary veins refuse
Their office, and endurance sends the blood
Back from the blanch'd cheeks to the terrible heart
To heave and madden there—(let tyrants tremble
Who rule pale slaves)—yes, in thy brave proud mien,
Thou baby hero, that art born in vain,
I see why Roman mothers wept for glory
And we for shame. I see the ancient beauty
Sport on the plain where Brutus watch'd his children,

And give them no supremacy. I see
Iulus' self. Cornelia would have own'd
These jewels. Regulus saw nothing fairer
When from the sands of Carthage his great thought
Walk'd by the streams of his Italian hills,
And by the well-known grove beheld his children
Play round the homeside myrtles, where their mother
Sat and look'd eastward! Wherein art thou less
Than Roman? Oh thou hapless flower, that canst not
Fruit in this frozen land, how shall I bless thee?
Art thou not noble, gentle, beautiful?
Hast thou one aspiration to climb aught
Beside thy mother's knee? Do they not love thee,
Believe thee, trust thee, hope in thee, adore thee?
Dost thou not take their cares from morn till eve,
And in the radiant alchemy of thine eyes
Transmute them into joys? Runs not their fate
In that inherited blood that warms thy cheek?
Were they not things like *thee*, and are they not
Themselves? and do they murmur? What though, fair one,
Angels might envy—if they were not angels—
The stature that the fresh bright air of freedom
Should fan thee to? It passes the court fashion,
Breaks footstep in the Austrian ranks, and fits
No cell in Spielberg. It might even betide
That Roman arms work'd ill in chains; a voice
Like that which cheer'd the legions, might be guilty

Of old ancestral words which would sound strange
In German ears. Nay, there was once a Roman—
I saw him, and felt nobler! he was like thee!
Like thee as star to star! If you be parents,
Fall down and pray that he may die!

The Mother. Good padre,
Pity us.

The Father. Priest!

The Mother. Be silent, he is moved,
Perchance *he* was a father.

[*A long pause, the Monk covers his head with his mantle.*

The Monk (*looking up*). Evening comes
Apace. The tired ox slackens in the furrow.
The shade that on your threshold paused but now,
Hath climb'd the vine where from the eaves the swallow
Sings early vespers. My full heart prescient
Heaves to the falling hour. Children, kneel down,
Let holy words spread evening in your souls,
Lest they be timeless when the far bell rings
Ave Maria. [*They kneel. The Monk reads.*

The Monk. And I heard a voice,
A voice from heaven, which said unto me, 'Write,
Blessed are the dead.' [*He pauses.*
Rise up! I had forgotten!
Forgive me!

The Mother. Reverend father!

The Father. Friend, what say'st thou?

The Monk. That if thou wert what that proud man should be
Who calls this child 'my son,' this land 'my country,'
Thou hadst cried out 'Amen!'

The Father. Sir Priest, so please you
To speak in riddles—read them.

The Monk. I *will* read them.
And mine enigma shall be such grim pastime
As fiends might play at.
Pity me, this anger
Wrongs you. I do forget that you are yet
But a few moments off from happiness,
And that the music of her shores is singing
Still in your ears. We dwellers in the dark
Forget the weakness of your daylight eyes.
I should remember that the twilight stands
'Twixt night and day. My fierce and tropical fancy,
Hot with swift pulses, saw the sun go down,
And look'd up for the stars. I had a brother—
I *had?* Oh heaven! there is no Lazarus
So poor as Dives fallen! You whose portion
In the abounding present is unspent—
You with whose friendships and familiar joys
Earth is still populous—you who have not
Learn'd yet, when stranger lips descant of love,
Unconsciously to look upon the turf—
You who are only of this upper world,
You know not what it costs to say '*I had.*'

But there shall come a time when ye shall sit
Safe in this cabin, yet shall feel the rain
Falling upon you, though your limbs be dry,
And your hearth warm. And then you shall forgive me,
And feel that I have something to forgive!
Then you shall know how sickly and distract
Thoughts grow, that pass their days beneath the sod,
And sit whole nights by graves.
I had a brother,
We were twin shoots from one dead stem. He grew
Nearer the sun, and ripen'd into beauty;
And I within the shadow of my thoughts,
Pined at his side and loved him. He was brave,
Gallant and free. I was the silent slave
Of fancies; neither laugh'd, nor fought, nor play'd,
And loved not morn nor eve for very trembling
At their long wandering shades. In childhood's sports
He won for me, and I look'd on aloof;
And when perchance I heard him call'd my brother,
Was proud and happy. So we grew together,
Within our dwelling by the desert plain,
Where the roe leap'd,
And from his icy hills the frequent wolf
Gave chivalry to slaughter. Here and there
Rude heaps, that had been cities, clad the ground
With history. And far and near, where grass
Was greenest and the unconscious goat browsed free,
The teeming soil was sown with desolations,

As though Time—striding o'er the field he reap'd—
Warm'd with the spoil, rich droppings for the gleaners
Threw round his harvest way. Frieze, pedestal,
Pillars that bore through years the weight of glory,
And take their rest. Tombs, arches, monuments,
Vainly set up to save a name, as though
The eternal served the perishable; urns,
Which winds had emptied of their dust, but left
Full of their immortality. In shrouds
Of reverent leaves, rich works of wondrous beauty
Lay sleeping—like the children in the wood—
Fairer than they. Columns like fallen giants,
The victor on the vanquish'd, stretch'd so stern
In death, that not a flower might dare to do
Their obsequies. And some from sweet Ionia
With those Ionia bore to Roman skies
Lay mingled, like a goddess and her mother,
Who wear, with difference, the co-equal brightness
Of fadeless youth. The plain thus strew'd with ages
Flower'd in the sunshine of to-day, and bore me
The Present and the Past. But there were some
Proud changeless stones that stood up in the sun,
And with their shadowy finger on the plain
Drew the same mystic circle day by day,
And these I worshipp'd. Honouring them, because
It needs must be they knew the sense that sign
Bore in the language of Eternity;
And fearing them for that dark hand which ever—

When I drew near their awful face at noon,
And, spent with wondering, sank down unconscious,
And slept upon the turf—came back at even
And cast me shuddering out.
So days wore on,
And childhood. And the shade of all these ruins
Fell on my soul. And *he*, my pride, grew up,
With, and without me. And we were such brothers
As day and night. We met at morn and eve.
Each sun uprose to find us hand in hand,
And see a tender parting. Each first star
Led back the shades and us. He flush'd with conquest,
Rich in the well slain antelope, and all
That feathery wage youth loves to take for labour;
I laden with new thoughts. Pale, travel-worn,
Spent with fierce exercise and faint with toil,
I, who—the shepherd of the plain would tell you—
Since sunbreak upon one same broken column
Sat like a Caryatid. So youth was mine,
And seasons crown'd it manhood.
Manhood came,
And with it those fierce instincts of strange combat,
That hurtle in the heart when the new powers,
Like eager vassals on Ascension-day,
Crowd round the throned will. Childhood and youth
May own unwritten law, and kiss the rod
That strikes, but parleys not. But man must be
A subject, not a slave. And manhood stood

Before the shadows that had awed the child,
And bade them answer. And they spoke. My heart
Stood up. A thousand senses ran to arms,
To guard the revelation; but it came not.
Like a mask'd guest, the voice went through my soul,
And wandering there long days and nights, made all
My hours alarums. So the phantom knight,
In awful legend of the old Romaunt,
By a proud castle winds his ghostly horn,
And blows his challenge in at every gate,
And through the chafed halls stalks the unearthly sound,
And fills with strange ubiquitous defiance
Turret and dungeon, battlement and keep,
Which groan back answering War. While at the blast
Grim sudden furies fill the martial place,
Helm rings with hauberk, scutcheon'd gonfalons
Wave in no wind. Shields rattle. Chargers neigh
To unblown clarions. Weapons clash unbid
On the vex'd walls, and men, with swords half-drawn,
Start up and stare into the troublous air.
Not otherwise the voice disturb'd my soul,
Till spectral nights and strange unnatural days
Beckon'd their neighbour, Death. I felt him chill
The sunshine round me. But I only look'd
More fondly for my brother.

When day went,
And we met by the well-known spot at even,
And by the kindred moon, he saw the pale

Faint life that lean'd upon his stalwart beauty,
I was a dearer burden than the spoils
Of his best hunting field. With tender pain
He led me forth at sunrise, and came back
Before the dews. And, with moist eyes, I mark'd
Daily he brought home less and less at even,
With forethought of the day's sad robbery,
Keeping in fond economy more strength
To lend mine indigence. And thus I measur'd
My life's receding tide. 'Twas beautiful
To see, as each wave ebb'd from earth, the sands
Purple with flowers from heaven. He gave me cares,
I paid him from the alms the hills, and vales,
Plains, ruins, waters, fields, and skies had thrown me
Through my long hours of waiting. I beheld him—
And so you shall behold your child one day—
Sublime as if a god of old had stepp'd
Warm from his marble pedestal. I gave him
Nectar for gods. I saw his eyes light up,
And into his heroic hand I put
The weapon of my thoughts. And he smote with it—
Look to your boy, he will smite so—he smote
And struck such flashes from a despot's helm
As might set thrones on fire. And some who winced
Complain'd. When the lamb bleats in the Abruzzi,
The wolf is silent—'tis the tyrant's music;
But let one miscreant yelper howl, and mark
How all the pack gives tongue. An outraged *people*

Cries out for ages, and the sacred sound
Broods o'er our land, and finds no wind to bear
The thankless burden hence. A *tyrant* yells,—
Though but the very meanest starveling hound,
The most distemper'd cur that feeds upon
The garbage thrown from palaces—no matter—
A thousand echoes tell it in Vienna,
And fill the air with German. Oh my brother,
Would I had been content to be thy debtor,
Nor paid thee in a coin that bore the stamp
Of freedom in a captive land! They seized him,
They seized! Who seized? Some Roman lictor—one
Beneath whose reverend hand it would be glory
To think that heroes suffer'd so, and counted
The touch no shame? Goths, whose barbarian sires
Made holiday for ours. Vandals and Huns.
The cubs of dams more savage than our mothers
Deign'd to enslave; all that rank Northern growth,
By whose rude hands the might of bones and thews
Bearded our conscript fathers in the forum,
And beards their children here,—who sit like them,
Silent, but not like them sublime. Camillus!
What! can we lounge upon our curule chairs,
And play the Roman only in endurance?
Earth! what hast thou of vigour less than Greece,
That in that genial soil the serpent's teeth
Sprang up arm'd men;—and here we have sown heroes
And reap—grass! Yes. He fell. Behold your son:

Picture him nobler than the noblest vision
Of thy day-dreams, poor mother! See, the bloodhounds
Have track'd him to your cot. A faded face
Lies with dark uprais'd eyes of love before
The fond heroic brother. Heavenly calm
Warders the room, and of the sweet emotions
Of the rejoicing world without, lets in
Only the silent sunshine. The door bursts!
A shriek! a shout! they seize him! The pale form
Springs at the first and falls. Now see your hero
Like an inspired colossus striding o'er him.
With either hand he hurls a savage hence,
Foots each bare neck, with twice another twain
Acquaints the sounding walls. Falls by some blow
From unseen hand. Sinks by the yelling weight
Of crowds. A moment more, and like dead game
Slung by some trooper's side, mother, he greets thee,
And leaves thee baptized in his sprinkled gore,
To faiths kings dream not of. Oh brother, brother,
Oh memory! that canst bring me back such woës
And break not! Thus they tore him from me. Ah,
Poor tender child, why doth thy baby heart
Look up through saddening eyes? What! little one,
And canst thou read the future? Dost thou know
That he was like thee? Ay, poor mother, clasp him,
Clasp him while yet thou mayst! Secure as thou
That morn I clasp'd my brother! Dost thou ask
What tidings fell upon the failing ear

Of him who in the cottage by the plain
Lay weeping? Be it as thou wilt, poor mother,
It concerns thee;—what if of all thy tears—
Thy fated tears—a few are shed too soon?
For me I am a rock which, long years hence,
The storms stripp'd rudely, and with my few flowers
Took all that nursed them, and to after tempests
Left but the cold bare stone. In earth or heaven
I have no more to fear. But for *thee*, mother,
I will read out this story, and perchance
Teach thee to strike the fire that yet may burn
The page ere it be thine.

The Mother. Oh that thou wouldst!

The Monk. Not of the dungeons, those dark catacombs
Where our oppressors heap'd their sins for ages,
Wrong after wrong, till the o'er-surfeited rock
At the great day of reckoning shall belch up
A thousand years to cry for vengeance. No,
Those Roman limbs were purchased far too dearly
To rot in Spielberg. He was tall of stature,
And fair to look upon. So shall your son
Be tall and fair. It pleasured some small tyrant
To see such goodly slaves. The shameful trappings
Of a detested loyalty, the fillets
That deck the sacrifice, the fearful gewgaws
That ratify the compact, when the body
Serves what the soul abhors, and with the bribe

Tricks out the whoredom, these worse chains replaced
The felon's fetters, and the outraged Roman
Rose up an Austrian soldier! The plot thickens—
The shadow of the end is on my soul—
Count tears for words—nay, you are parents—I
Was but a brother—wherefore should I speak?
Poor mother! in this Jordan I have need
To be baptized of you. My soul is wise
In grief. Yet a few years and you shall smile—
If you *can* smile—to think I taught ye. Tell me,
What would your gallant boy, if tyrants bade him
Shed Roman blood like rain? Look on your Roman!
Mine was no less!—*Was*—Oh my heart! He hurl'd—
His proud looks prouder than his words of pride,—
With desperate hand the execrated sword
Flagrant before the despot and defied him!
Rent from his breast the gilt dishonour, spurn'd it
Into Italian dust. Erect, defiant,
Before the host cried Freedom! and was doom'd,
Doom'd to a coward's death. They led him forth,
They led him forth a pace upon the Lea,
Scourged, buffeted, reviled, and only asking
To die unbound, with his unconquer'd face
Turn'd to the south and home. And they denied him.
By a rude trench where fresh-turn'd earth lay dark,
He stood a passing moment, and since then
I say 'I had a brother.'

If I weep

To see your child, forgive me, and remember
When I drew near his sport this eve, and you
Look'd on with smiles, and I with sighs, you marvell'd.
Why marvel, when we saw not the same scene?
Before you lay the happy evening world,
O'er-joyous in the promise of more joy,
And there he sported like a merry voice
Singing of morrows. Mine eyes sought the same
Point of the compass, but for me the shades
In my dark soul went forth to meet the night,
The night that look'd from grove and thicket, calling
By missionary winds and twilight birds
All earth to that meek face wherein she payeth
Her duties to the moon. He sported, too,
In my world, and 'twas sweet to look on him.
But to my eyes, in ambient atmospheres
Of tints and hues that brighten'd other days,
Floated round smiling—like a choir of angels
About a cherub—that old dreamy past,
In which he plays my brother. Near his feet
There was a long sad mound, and by the mound
Dark drops of blood. And when he prattled out
His childish joy, my heart heard distant muskets,
And to my ear the heavy earth fell dead
Into a coffinless grave.

[*The vesper bell sounds from the distant convent.*

Ave Maria!

The Mother (*throwing herself passionately to the ground*).
Ave Maria! Happy evermore,
Oh Mater Unigeniti—save, save,
Oh save my child!
The Father. Ave Maria! Queen
Of judgment that went forth to victory!
Remember desolation blights the hills
That slew the Crucified! Mother avenged!
If my first-born must be like thine, grant vengeance
Like thine!
The Mother. If it must be——
The Monk. Ave Maria! say
It shall *not* be! Thou who didst bear salvation!
Oh Virgin! thou who in thy breast didst carry
The fate of worlds unfainting—give, give strength
To these!
The Father and Mother. Oh Mother, pity us!——
The Monk. Oh Mother,
Pity our country! Mater benedicta!
Thou who three days didst watch a tomb in tears,
Pity our vigil of a thousand years,
And bid the dead arise!
The Father and Mother. Oh Queen of sighs,
Look down on us from thy fair heaven with eyes
Softer than evening!
The Mother. Mater casta, pia,
Quondam afflicta—take him to thy skies!
Even what thou wilt for me, but oh, for him

Hast thou no place among thy seraphim?
Is he not thine? Thou gavest him. Take, oh take
The bright gift back, for a sad mother's sake,
Oh Mother!

The Monk. Ah?

The Father. Amen!

The Monk. Ave Maria! [*They rise.*

The Father. Priest, hast thou no Amen?

The Monk. Did I not tell you
That you should crave my blessing, though it fell
Black as a curse?

The Mother. Alas!

The Monk. Says the priest ill
Who prays the mother's prayer?

The Mother. Be merciful!

The Monk. Nay, be *you* merciful. I look upon
This gentle boy, and every blushing feature
Of his young beauty cries for mercy——

The Mother. Priest,
If thou art false in all things as in this,
God help thee. I have been a tender mother!

The Monk. Thou filiocide! Why should he die?
This land,
Hath it no place for him? This Roman sunshine,
Doth it fall strangely on his cheek?
These flowers,
Twine they not kindly with his hair, and peep
With fondness in his brighter face?

The Boy. Oh, mother,
Tell him they love me.
The Mother. Hush! my beautiful;
What is there loves thee not?
The Monk. Why should he die,
Whom the whole world surrounds, and with chaste voices
Woos to sweet life? You craven hearts! Who slew
My brother, and shall slay your son? These hills?
These woods that frown on you? The sun and moon,
That look down on their ancient shrines, and smile
That you adore their God? Tell me, what lot
Is desperate which the heaven and earth condemn not?
Did this land, which bore gods, spend all its strength
In the sublime conception, and birth-worn
Bring pigmies forth in these last days? What fate
Made only *Romans* mortal? Is it written
That when the oppressor meets the oppress'd, and one
Dies, it must be the *slave?* You Romans!—stay,
I have o'ershot myself. You will betray me.
You have look'd on this child for five long years,
Five long fond loving years, and never wish'd
To save him—why should I——
The Mother. Oh father, save him!
Bid me die—on my knees——
The Father. Peace. Priest, the cloud
Is silent till it lightens; dost thou take me?
The Monk. Thou hast a fearless eye.
The Father. Priest, try my heart!

The Monk. Ah, traitor! what? 'tis well. Yes, he for whom
That fair boy prattles hath a lifelong preacher
No father yet sat under unconverted.
We men are calm or hurricane. The heart
Fills silently, and at the last wrong bursts.
He laughs his merry creed out at all hours,
And day and night looks treason.

The Father. Come the day
When deeds shall back his looks!

The Monk. Well said, brave Roman!
Thy hand! and we are brothers. Shall we brook
To see this Italy our fathers left us
Held for an Austrian garden?

The Father. Noble priest,
Some say the garden bears strange fruit ere long,
But the old soil is crop-sore, and craves fatting
With German blood.

The Monk. Ah?

The Father. Hast thou heard some whispers
The wind brings from Sardinia? Is it well?

The Monk. All things are well, but silence and endurance.

The Father. Bend here! the very spider on the wall
Must not hear this——

The Monk. (Ay, what so pitiful,
So loathsome, but it may connive with kings?)

The Father. Hark in thine ear. The jolly lords of Naples,
Florence, Turin, Verona, ay, Modena,
And some too near to name, ride bravely,—eh?
What if the horse kick?

The Monk. Ah?

The Father. This is fair weather;
Worse grubs have grown to butterflies. How now,
If these same Duchies spread their wings Republics?
What then, my Carbonaro? Is it well?

The Monk. 'Tis well. The poorest living face hath grace
Beside a death's-head. That fierce king did well
Who slew the priests of Baal, hew'd down his groves,
And spoil'd his altars. But that king did better
Who crown'd Moriah. 'Tis a zealot's faith
That blasts the shrines of the false god, but builds
No temple to the true.

The Father. Ay, what is Truth?
Pilate lacks answer.

The Monk. The bold man like thee,
Who lays his life in a strange hand——

The Father (*starting*). Ah, Priest!
His *life*—how now?

The Monk. Jestest, my gentle Roman?
Wronged men like us, sworn to such deeds as ours,
Leave courtly phrases when they speak of *treason.*
Alas, poor Italy! to tell his fortune

To whom a priest's lips can bring home rebellion,
Merits no sorcerer's fee. A truce to trifling.
What wasted words are these! Thou art a father,
Have I not said to thee this boy that is
To die, may live—what more?

The Father. No more. Sir Priest,
Thou takest me ill. There is no wild rebellion
So fierce I have not fire enough to light it.
If I had rather chosen to be free,
Of all men—so. Thou hast my faith, who holdest
My halter.

The Mother. And, by Heaven, thou hast it, Priest,
Though we were freer than a thousand winds!
Ay, and our lives a million million times
Lived and died over, so thou wilt but save
My child.

The Monk. Have I not said it? Wherefore, friends,
Is this unseemly turbulence of passion?
Did you not call me to your solemn council?
Had I not told you how my brother died?
Had you not wept with vision of those pangs,
Which in that boy's face yet shall rack your eyes?——

The Mother. Shall? Oh, my father! Oh, my father!

The Monk. SHALL.
He who would conquer kings, *himself* must be
The first king conquer'd. Shall a rebel start
To hear rebellion? Shall I have my counsel

Cried up and down the earth, like the small will
Of vulgar majesty? He who would creep
To sleeping game is silent. Will they stand
Firm, think you, at the judgment and the scaffold,
Who start beneath the lintel of their homes,
And rave at evening chat? No. He must die.

[*The mother starts up, seizing a knife that lies near.*

The Mother. Priest! I am but a woman, and a weak one!
I think thee faithful, and in that thought bless thee.
I am a wife, a wife, Priest, and a true one;
I think *him* brave, and in that thought revere him;
But let me doubt ye—only let me doubt ye—
And I would wash that hearthstone in your blood,
If but the poorest spatter on the wall
Would save my child!

The Monk (*aside*). Then by that chain I lead thee,
Wild lioness.

(*Aloud.*) There heaves a bosom meet
To suckle Freedom. Calm thee, Roman mother,
That yet shalt smile in Rome. The day may come
To strike; till then seal up thine own hot lips,
As thou wouldst seal thy foe's. Be true, a hero
Shall call thee 'mother!' Fail but in thy fealty
To the least word of mine, my heaviest grief
Is bliss beside thy lightest. Peace. This seal
Makes the bond perfect. Now to calmer counsel.
Thou say'st, brave Roman, that our lords ride fiercely,

That the steed chafes already—see! he throws them.
Who vaults into the saddle? Every flock
Has slain its pigmy swain—salvete greges!
But, patriot, who shall lead the sheep to pasture,
And keep the wolf at bay?

The Father. Each separate state
Must crown the sovereign people.

The Monk. By what name
Will men speak, think ye, of that seven-hill'd city,
Within whose catacombs dominion sleeps,
And in whose ruins Time himself walks lightly,
Lest she should stir below?

The Father. Rome.

The Monk. And the rest,
How do you name them?

The Father. By the names they found
Noble enough to strike in; thus, Milan.

The Monk. And why? Is the sky bluer at Milan
Than where we stand? Are the clouds red at noon?
Or by what mystic omen doth the world
Call for this christening? Doth Dame Nature, old,
And yearning to be fruitful in her dotage,
Breed names, and call them children?
When you dream
Of our Italian fatherland, it glitters
With half a hecatomb of palaces,
Each royal. Your free heart is sad. You frown.
Strike off their crowns. Salute them commonweals,

And wake up shouting 'Glory!' How now, Roman,
If some strong arm stretching from sea to sea
Sweep all your pasteboard kickshaws to the ocean,
And leave us the broad field of Italy
To build up ROME?
Marvel not, gentle friends,
Sprung out of yesterday, poor hearts, and growing
Like creeping plants, even to the size and fashion
Of what ye lean on—marvel not that we
Who worship Freedom with one soul, adore her
In different deity. As I have told you,
Dark fanes and reverend trophies, stones that might
Be portals to the world; the fossil limbs
By which we build the giants of old time;
Grey wonders stranger for decay; strange fragments
Of forms once held divine, and still, like angels,
Immortal everywhere; lone hermit columns,
Whereto the ideal hath no space to add
The pile they bore; stern pediments that look'd
On altars where antipodes burnt incense,
And the three arms of the great globe piled up
Their several tribute; all the sacred shades
Which the great Past receding from the world
Casts out of heaven on earth;—these and like these,
The high, the deep, the eternal, the unbounded,
Were sponsors to my soul: and if my thought,
Where your more nice and neoteric fancy
Labours with townships, deals out continents,

Think it no marvel. Listen.
The sunrise
Of that dread day which found me brotherless,
Saw a pale face on a low bed. Despair
Gave life by taking it. That evening's sun
Fell on the empty pallet, and beside it
An arm'd man, flush'd to wildness.
Lost, alone,
Every sweet structure of my heart in heaps,
With the one terrible shock; mazed, ignorant
Of all things but the one which cast them forth,
The desolation in my soul cried out,
And rushing to the ruins I fell down,
The darkest ruin of all. I knelt and wept,
And was a child before them, with the madness
Of a man's heart. I fell upon my face.
Strange sleep possess'd me. Through the hot short night,
Across the hotter desert of my brain
My life went past. All seasons new and old,
All hours of day and night, all thoughts, fears, fancies,
Born on this spot, met as in after-death
About me; and of each my tatter'd heart
Begg'd healing and found none. At each new face
I look'd up wild with hope, and look'd down fierce
With chafed expectance. Then I rose and cursed
All hope, all thought, all knowledge, all belief,
And fell down still believing. With each hour

In my spent soul some lingering faith went out,
Woes that began in fire had burnt to blackness,
The very good within me had grown grim,
The frenzy of my shipwreck'd heart had thrown
Its last crust overboard—then, then, oh God!
Then in the midnight darkness of my passion,
The veil was rent which hid the holy of holies,
And I beheld and worshipp'd. Mad despair
Rung out the desperate challenge—'What art thou,
Unpitying presence! which for years beside
These stones hast stood before me, pass'd me, touch'd me,
Shook my blind sense, and seal'd my eyes from seeing?
Tell me, that I may curse thee!'
The sun rose.
Forth towards me as in awful adjuration
Each ruin stretch'd appealing shades. There came
Soft lightning on my soul, and by a voice
Ineffable, and heard not with the ears,
'ROME.' At that sound a thousand thousand voices
Spread it through all things. Each imperial column,
Each prone grey stone, touch'd by the eloquent winds,
Heard it and gave it back. Trees, woods and fountains
In musical confusion, leaves, buds, blossoms—
Even to small flowers unseen, with voices smaller
Than treble of a fay—atoms of sound
Whereof a thousand falling on one ear,
The unwitting sense should count them troubled silence—
Birds, brooks, and waterfalls,—all tongues of dawn,

The very morning hum of summer time,
Swell'd the sweet tumult; early mists that lay
Silent on hill-tops, vocal in the sun
Roll'd off like waves of voices, the stirr'd air
Sung with bright ecstasy. Down came the thunder,
Like a vast hull cleaving the sea of sound,
That lash'd up louder; then the hills cried out,
And emulous the valleys; all the earth
Shook with the sounding ardour, and methought
My flush'd soul, drunk with zeal, leap'd high and shouted,
ROME! With that name, incomprehensible beauty
Fill'd the still gratulate air from earth to heaven,
And knowing I knew not. Even as one dead
I fell. As though that one great sight accomplish'd
All consciousness, and the progressive sense
Reaching the goal stood still.
Ere I awoke,
The sun had mounted the proud throne of noon,
Received the homage of the world, and stept
From his high-place well-pleased.
Calm, brave, serene,
Refresh'd as from a sleep of ages, weak
As a birth-weary mother, but yet strong
In cast-out sorrows, I stood up and gazed
With long looks of sweet wonder. The fierce craving
In my lank hungry soul had ceased. The thirst
That burn'd my heart was quench'd. The mystic
yearning

For something ever near, and ever far,
That made my life one dream of wasting fever,
Was over. All those indistinct strange voices
Wherein, like waters underground, great truths
Were heaving in my heart, and lash'd its sides
To bursting ; those dim tones wherein, like fragrance
From troubled flowers at midnight, unseen balm
Went up in my dark soul, all the forerunners,
The thousand messengers by which this night
Had told me it would come,—all partial knowledge
Before the consummation fell away
As things that had no office ; wither'd up
Like blossom on the fruit. Thus it must be
That noble man who deems his nature born
As vast as truth, must sweat, and toil, and suffer,
And overcome—enduring. When the heart
Adds a new planet to its heaven, great portents
Clash the celestial influence ; strange signs
Of coming dread, mysterious agencies,
And omens inconceivable convulse
The expectant system, while the stranger sails
Still out of sight in space. Dim echoings
Not of the truth, but witnessing the truth—
Like the resounding thunder of the rock
Which the sea passes—rushing thoughts like heralds,
Voices which seem to clear the way for greatness,
Cry advent in the soul, like the far shoutings
That say a monarch comes. These must go by,

And then the man who can outwatch this vigil
Sees the apocalypse. Oh that first hour
Within the Eden of a quiet soul!
Oh for that bounteous hour, to him whose youth,
Bred up in grief's sad penury, hath found
Joy's daily pittance all too poor to lay
One pleasance by; oh that Pierian hour
When first the plenteous life o'erwelling sends
Its irrigating streams before the face
Of the young hope, and decks, in frondent distance,
To-morrow with the verdure of to-day.
That hour when first the slipping foot grows firm
Upon some plot of present, and we gaze
From the sufficient rock with softening eyes
Across the green sweet pastures of the future,
And for the first time dare to look on them
As heritage. How the exulting thoughts,
Like children on a holiday, rush forth
And shout, and call to every humming bee,
And bless the birds for angels! Oh that hour!
In the reflected sunshine of remembrance
My heart is melting. Twilight and the dews
Proclaim me parlous. 'Tis a sorry string
That, being struck, is silent. Farewell Romans.
Meet me to-morrow here. This is no mood
To plan stern deeds. Farewell. Remember, courage,
Truth, silence. If you fail in either, look
Upon your boy.

SCENE VII.

A LONELY SPOT. THE TURF-GROWN SITE OF SOME OLD ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE.

A meeting of Minstrels. An aged Bard presides. The Monk enters.

The Monk (*to a Minstrel*). Sir,
I have walk'd far and crave a seat.
Minstrel (*to another*). His reverence
Is weary and would sit. Is it against
The statutes of our order?
Second Minstrel. Holy Sir,
There are good feet that do not walk Parnassus.
Behold us here a minstrel convocation,
And deem it no irreverence if we say,
That in that company of bards a priest
Lacks civic rights.
The Monk. Sir, *thou* art not yet free
Of that most holy guild. Thy soul hath yet
To learn the instinctive flight which cleaves the air
Of immortality. I do perceive
As yet it wings by sight. The dove that bears
The poet's message starts from that pure height
Where earthly fashions fade. Let common eyes
Read men in frock and cowl. The creeping thing
That harbours in the bark knows not the region
Where the fruit hangs. I hoped, Sirs, to find here

A nobler estimation.

Another Minstrel. And thou *shalt.*

Others. Bravo! Well said. Hear Giulio!

Another. This guitar,
Its face, Sir Priest, like mine, is brown with age;
Find me the newest dainty from Cremona
That dares a bar with it!

Another. Or mine, and yet
'Twas the sole heritage my grandsire left.

Another. Would we, Sir Priest, exchange these twisted entrails
For chords of gold?

Another. Faith, I would string my lute
With hangman's hemp, if it made music.

Others. Ay,
And I. And I. And I.

The President. Sir and good father,
You see us here a humble company—
I speak the language of the world, Sir, nor
Affirming nor denying—(the wayfarer
Of many lands is not responsible
For each vernacular)—Sir, in what stature
We may be seen by the renewing angel
Some few years hence I say not, but you see us
Being what we are, met to pursue an art
Lightly esteem'd, but which to name divine
Is not the filial rapture of a son,
Since in the change of time it hath not changed;
Indigenous to all the earth. A spirit

Evoked by many, but a bound familiar
To no magician yet. The equal tenant
Of loftiest palace and of lowliest cot,
Treading the rustic and the royal floor
To the same step and time. In every age,
With all the reverence that man claims as man,
Preaching to clouted clown, and with no more
To thronèd kings. The unrespective friend—
In such celestial wise as gods befriend—
By turns of haughtiest monarch, humblest swain;
And with impartial love and power alike
Ennobling prince and peasant. Giving all,
Receiving never. What else makes a god?
What human art looks so divine on earth?
And, as you tell us, seraphs in high heaven
Find nothing worthier. Sir, accept me well,
Let not these lutes, pipes, harps, and dulcimers,
And outward signs of the musician's trade,
Mis-teach you of us. Reverend Sir, believe not
That—priests of Harmony—our service knows
One only of her temples. Sir, we hope
One day to serve her where the ears of flesh
Cannot inherit; where material sounds
Enrobe no more her pure divinity.
And we, *un*cumber'd by the aids of sense,
Shall see, and in the silent universe
Adore her. Holy Sir, each minstrel here
Is poet also.

The Monk. Canst thou tell me, friend,
What 'tis to be a poet?
President. Such the theme
Of this day's contest.
The Monk. Let me strike a string
In such a strife.
President. Read thou this riddle for us,
And, father, this my chair I abdicate,
And crown thee king of bards.
The Monk. Nay, friend, forbear—
Prithee no kings. I would believe, good brother,
All honest here. Have you a kind harp, friends,
That for a stranger's sake will do sweet duty
In unaccustomed hands?
One. Take mine.
Another. Or mine.
Another. Or mine.
Another (*aside*). Now, Sackcloth!
Another (*aside*). Look to hear Apollo
Discourse Church music!
Another (*aside*). To the buttery-hatch,
Ye strolling thrummers. 'Tis alms-giving day,
My life the godly almoner is good
At broken victuals. How many stale masses,
Crusts scriptural and classic bones——
Another. Fie, Henri.
Thy wanton ditty!

Henri. Ingrate! wot I not
The priest was coming?

Another (*aside*). Hush, clean ears, clean ears,
A psalm at least!

Another. Surely the Song of Songs.

Henri. Ay, but no Solomon's.

Others. Friends, friends, friends,
Silence.

The Monk sings. The poet bends above his lyre and strikes—

No smile, no smile of rapture on his face;—
The poet bends above his lyre and strikes,
No fire, no fire of passion, in his eye;—
The poet bends above his lyre and strikes,
No flush, no prophet's flush, upon his cheek;—
Calm as the grand white cloud where thunders sleep,
Like a wrapt listener—not in vain to listen—
Feeling the winds with every sense to catch
Some far sound wandering in the depths of space,
The poet bends above his lyre and strikes.

[*Interlude of music.*

The poet bends above his lyre and strikes.
Ah Heaven! I hear! Again. Ah Heaven, I hear!
Again:—the vacant eyes are moist with tears!
Again:—they gleam with vision. Bending lower,
Crowding his soul upon the strings.—Again.
Hark, hark, thou heart that leapest! Ye thrill'd fibres!
See the triumphant minstrel in the dust,

To his own music. Hark! Angels in heaven
Catch it on golden harps! Down float their echoes
Richer than dews of Paradise. Inspired,
Tuning each chord to the enchanted key,
The poet sweeps the strings and wakes, awe-stricken,
The sounds that never die. From hill to hill
They vibrate round the world of time, as deep
Calleth to deep.

[*Here the Monk ceases to sing.*

But note like this stirs not
The wind of every day. And 'tis the ear
To know it, woo it, wait for it, and stand
Amid a Babel deaf to other speech,
That makes a poet. And from ear like this,
That troubling of the air which common men
Call harmony, falls unrespected off,
As balls from a charm'd life.

Hear yet again
A better parable. The good man hears
The voice in which God speaks to men. The poet,
In some wrapt moment of intense attendance,
The skies being genial and the earthly air
Propitious, catches on the inward ear
The awful and unutterable meanings
Of a divine soliloquy.

Soul-trembling
With incommunicable things, he speaks
At infinite distance. So a babe in smiles

Repeats the unknown and unknowable
Joys of a smiling mother.

President. Victor, hail!

How say you, friends—a triumph?

Many. Crown him, crown him!

The Monk. Good friends, fair brothers, how have I deserved this?

Whose chattels have I seized, whose hearth profaned,
Whom have I slain, whose daughter have I ravish'd,
That you should cry of *crowns?*

President. Sir, reverend Sir,

This chair of state is yours.

All. Ascend, ascend!

The Monk. Friends, brother bards, since thus you bid me call you,

With a long weary journey must I buy
The honours of this moment? When I spent
Those labours—all my wealth—they were disbursed
In the shrewd estimate that so much outlay
Invested in your wisdom could but yield
A goodly increase. Only on such venture
Prudence, the soul's stern sacristan, paid down
The perils of this pilgrimage. Which of you,
Receiving wherewithal to buy a harp,
Shall spend it on a chaplet? Which among you,
Playing the overture to some mild air
Of sweet attendance and humility,
Succeeds it with a march? My gentle friends,

Let me go even as I came,—as much
Wiser as you may please—in all things else
No wit less humble. Sir, and my good father,
Resume the place of honour. These grey hairs
And time-taught looks beseem it. I beseech you,
Speak more at length. Methinks the chorister years
Must needs chant nobly in such reverend walls.
For me, I claim the seat of a disciple,
And if in any wise I have excell'd,
And I yet fear, dear friends, you do mistake
The stature of your courtesy for that
Of my desert—reward me, ere we part,
With one more hearing.

Many shout. Ten! Agreed. Agreed.
Agreed. Long live the Monk. Well said!

President. Companions,
You have heard the conqueror. While we have forgotten
Our wonted duties for this episode,
The unoblivious sun hath paused not once;
Our time is far spent, and five harps are still
Unstruck. Hath any brother yet unheard
Any unbaptized child of voice or lute
Born since our last song-feast, whereon he craves
Fraternal benediction? Let each such
Stand forth.

A Minstrel. I have a tale of rural pity,
Set in a rustic measure to such music
As the uncertain winds, and rustling leaves,

And devious sounds of night made round the heads
Of them it sings. A very simple sorrow,
To be heard only in the silent hours
It sigh'd in. Use it gently, Sirs; I call it
'The Winter's Night.'

President. Acquit thee, brother!

All. Hear!

Minstrel sings. And she stood at its father's gate,
At its father's gate she stood,
With her baby at her breast;
'Twas about the hour of rest—
There were lights within the place—
The old moon began to sink,
(Long, like her, upon the wane,)
It grew dark; she drew her hood
Close about her pallid face;
At the portal down she sate,
Where she will not sit again.
'Little one,' she slowly said,
Bending low her lowly head,
'In all this wide world only thee,
And my shame, *he* gave to me.
When *thou* camest I did think
On that other gift of his—
Hating that I dreaded this.
Thou art fair—but so was he;
'Tis a winning smile of thine,—
Ah! what fatal praise it is!—

One such smile once won all mine.
Little one, I not repine,
It befits me well to wait
My lord's will, till I be dead—
Once it was a gentler will!'

With that, a night-breeze full chill,
Shook some dead leaves from the lime;
At the sad sound, loud and burly
Like a warder, went the blast
Round about the lordly house;
Hustled her with menial wrath,
Much compelling forth her cast,
Who was all too fain to go;
She sank down upon the path—
She cower'd lower, murmuring low,
'What was I that I should earn,
For I loved him, more return
Than I look'd for of the sun,
When he smiled upon me early
In our merry milking-time?'

Then was silence all; the mouse
Rustled with the beechen mast,
The lank fox yelp'd round, the owl
Floating, shriek'd pale horror past;
Strange and evil-omen'd fowl
Croak'd about her, and knew not.

Round her had the last bat fed.
'Little one,' she said, 'the cot
Where I bore thee was too low
For a haughty baron's bride.
Little one, I hope to go
Where the palace-halls are wide;
When thou prattlest at his knee,
Wilt thou sometimes speak of me?
Tell him, in some eve,' she said,
'Where thou knowest I shall be.
When he hears that I am grand,
In those mansions ever fair,
Will he look upon me there
As a lady of the land,
And think no more in scorn
Upon thee and on the dead?'
All below the garden banks,
Where the blighted aspens grew,
Faded leaves faint breezes blew,
As in pity, round her. Then
Low whispering in her plaintive plight,
Her shivering babe she nearer nurst.
'Tis a bitter night,' said she,
'Little one, a dreary night.
Little shalt thou bless the first,
Pass'd upon thy father's ground.
Ay! cower closer in thy nest,
Birdie! that didst never build.

There is warmth enough for thee,
Though the frost shall split the tree
Where it rocks.'
'Little one,' she said again,
'Babe,' she said, 'my little son,
Thou and I at last must part;
There is in my freezing heart
Only life enough for one.
By the crowing of the cocks,
Early steps will tread the way,
Could mine arms but wrap thee round
Till the dawning of the day!'
Silent then she seem'd to pray,
Then she spoke like one in pain,
'Little one, it shall be done,
I will keep thee back no more;
It were sweet to go together,
If thou couldst be mine alone;
As it is I must restore
Treasure not mine own.
All the gift and the sweet thanks
Will be over by to-morrow.
He must weep some tears to see
What at morn they will bring in
Where she dared not living come.
He will take thee to his home,
And bless the mother in the child.
Little one, 'tis sweet to me,

Who once gave him all I had—
Hoped it duty, found it sin—
Once more to give all, but now
Take no shame, and no more sorrow
Than a death-pang sets at rest.'
Closer then her babe she prest,
Chiller sank the wintry weather.
Once again the owl cried near,
Once more croak'd the strange night-bird;
From the stagnance of the fosse
Lorn pale mists, like winding-gear,
Hung about her and look'd sad;
Then the blast, that all this while
Slumber'd by a freezing fountain,
Burst out rudely, like a prince
From a midnight revel rushing,
In his train a thousand airs,
Each ambitious of his guilt,
Each as cruel, cold and wild,
Each as rugged, chill and stark,
Hurtled round their leader crushing
All the fretwork of the dark;
Frosty palace, turret and tower,
Mosque and arabesque, mist-built
By winter-fairies. Then, grown gross
With the licence of the hour,
They smote the mother and the child!
Dark night grew darker, not a smile

Came from one star. The moon long since
Had sunk behind the mountain.
At the mirkest somewhat stirred
The sere leaves, where the mother sate;
For a moment the babe cried,
Something in the silence sigh'd,
And the night was still. Oh fate!
What hadst thou done? Oh that hard sight
Which morn must see! When Winter went
About the earth at dawn, he rent
His locks in pain, and cast grey hairs
Upon it as he past. So when
Maids, poor mother, wail thy lot—
Mournful at the close of day—
By that legendary spot
Oft they tell us, weeping, how
Hoar frost lay on thy pale brow
When they found thee, and was not
Paler than the clay.

A Minstrel. A grievous tale!

The Monk. Where's he that dares to say so?
Liar! thou art not grieved. Any vile Austrian
May serve thy sister so to-morrow night,
And he that wears the longest sword among ye
Shall fear to draw it!

A young Minstrel. Here's my blade! Show me
The bloodless German!

The Monk. Youth! respect thy master!

Dost thou talk treason? What, boy, if the German
Be bloodless? He hath blood enough to rule thee!
Tut! sheath thy maiden sword—leave pantomime
To puppets—I but said thou art not grieved.
And I said well. Such thews as thine being grieved
Ne'er yet were idlers. Tut, tut, man, be grateful,
Thine owner feeds thee well. I never saw
A sleeker slave.

The Minstrel. Slave!

President. Friends, friends, friends, I pray you,
Silence. Benvolio's song!

A Minstrel. I have a fancy
About a rose; sung on the morn I saw
My mother's first grey hair. Let your harsh thoughts
Breathe gently on it—it is *overblown.*

Oh maiden! touch gently the rose overblown,
And think of the mother thy childhood hath known;
Smile not on the buds that exult from her stem,
Lest her pallor grow paler that thou lovest them.
From their beauties, oh maid, each bright butterfly chase,
'Till his duties are paid to that dew-faded face,
And forbid the gay bee one deceitful sweet tone,
Till his vows are all said to the rose overblown.
Sorrow, oh maid, is more grateful than bliss,
Rosebuds were made for the light breeze to kiss.
And woo how thou wilt in the soft hope to see
Some bright bursting blossom that blooms but for thee,

Weep thy fond wish, thou shalt look up to find
Thy tears worn as gems to beguile the next wind.
Turn then thine eyes to the rose overblown,
Speak of its place in a tremulous tone,
Sigh to its leaves as they fall one by one,
And think how the young hopes the heart used to own
Are all shedding fast—like the rose overblown.
Yes, turn in thy gloom to the rose overblown,
Reverently gather each leaf that hath gone,
Watch every canker and wail every streak,
As thou countest the lines on thy mother's dim cheek ;
Twilight by twilight, and day after day,
Keep sweet attendance on sweeter decay.
When all is over weep tears—two or three—
And perchance long years hence, when the grass grows
o'er thee,
Fond fragrant tribute to days long by-gone,
Shall be shed on thy grave by some rose overblown.

The Monk. We are a wealthy people
In all the faculties of woe. We have
Our sighs for roses, elegies for sparrows,
And seas of salt tears for deceased gold-fish ;
We eat our pet lambs in a mourning robe,
And bury gamecocks with 'the point of war.'
And since we weep no tears for *thee*, my country,
It needs must be thou hast deserved thy death.
Rome, Rome ! I was deceived ; I thought thee murder'd.
Ay, foully, foully murder'd !

A Minstrel. Thou hast thought
Well.

Others. Bravo, Pietro !

Others. Hear him !

The Monk. This is treason.
A priest, I cannot hear my sovereign slander'd !
One word more, I denounce you !

The President. Friends, attend !
Silence !

Vicenzo, venerable brother,
Methinks I heard thy harp. Its youthful strings
Sound to me through the music of those years,
Those threescore years, since first we play'd together,
As the dear voice of a beloved girl,
In virgin throng of louder choristers,
While all the troop contend before the ear,
Passeth alone and free to the hid heart.
Dreaming of youth doth make me young again !
Friend, thou hast been a man of grief, and though
My dream of thy first music be a dream,
Thy sounds to-day are sweeter. Such a touch
Hath gracious wisdom. The great harmony
Of a most sad sweet life hath been play'd out
Upon those strings, and sympathetic chords
Repeat it. Holy brother, there are some
In this good company who know thee not.
Forego the privilege of years, and lift,
A moment, all the mantle from thine heart.

Our eyes are blind with noonday, and our brows
Ache with the tropics. Let us with chaste awe
Stand in the mellow evening of thy voice,
Before the old man's soul—the rayless sun
Seen through the mist of sorrows.
Thanks, dear brother,
That strain replies. I hear it, like a chime
To vespers.

Vicenzo. Friend, why is thy speech of 'brothers?'
My brother died. I heard last night, in the dark,
How the first Christians spake to one who went
Where I shall soon behold him.

Some. Good Vicenzo!

Others. Hear!

Others. Hear Vicenzo.

Vicenzo. Clamorous sirs, you are wise.
Give your praise now. You will need all your silence
When I have sung. The men of whom I speak
Lived by the prime tradition, ere the hands
Of ages soil'd it, or the guilt that shrunk
Before that bare intolerable witness
Bound it in gems and purple. Sirs, my lay
Is simple as their faith.

[*He sings.*

Brother, there is a vacant spot within our holy band,
And poorer is our earthly lot by one strong heart and hand.

Yet, brother, it were ill to weep, when life hath been so
drear,
That we are left alone to keep its painful vigil here.
'Twere ill if thou hast trod the way to count the labouring
hours,
Or mourn that sorrow fill'd thy cup with hastier hand than
ours.
Sleep softly by thy bending tree, till death's long sleep be
o'er,
That thou canst not remember, we remember thee the
more.
Sleep softly,—that thine heart hath pass'd through all
death's deep distress,
To such calm rest as now thou hast, shall make us dread
it less.
Sleep softly, brother, sleep. But oh, if there are hopes
more blest
Than sleep, where seasons come and go about a dream-
less rest;
If we may deem this grave a shrine which summer rites
observe,
Where autumn pours the votive wine, and white-robed
winters serve;
If we may think that those who now sit side by side with
God,
Have sent for thee to ask thee how we tread the path they
trod;

Oh, brother, if it be not sin when God hath broke the chain
Of earthly thought, to bind thee in its fever'd links again,
This much of all that earth did know, and all that life hath given,
The sadness of our love below bequeathes thy bliss in heaven;
Remember what the bounden bear, though thou for aye art free,
And speak of us as kindly there, as here we think of thee.

The Monk. 'Remember what the bounden bear!' Old man,
We cannot sing this song. There may be lands
Where chains are heavy. Here in Italy
We wear them as the draught-ox wears his bells—

One. Priest!

The Monk. Hark that martial strain! Ye Gods, do all Dead tongues cry out at once?

A Minstrel. You Romans! see
The vision of Quirinus!

The Monk. Ha, ha, ha!

The Minstrel (*sings*). Who shall say what thoughts of glory life's mean paths unhonour'd tread,
Like those rays of distant suns, that pass us, viewless, overhead?
For the heaviest heart that sleepeth hath its heavy sleeping dream,
Like the dull light on the ripple of a duller twilight stream;

But, oh poet, if the dullard hath a soul beyond thy ken,
Who shall paint the hero's vision, who among the sons of men?
Who shall paint him, wrapt and lonely, when the god within him speaks,
And the passing skirts of Fate smite the blood into his cheeks;
When the future on the ocean of his great soul hangs like night,
And some hull of thought comes ploughing all its midseas into light?
Who shall paint him leaning on the Present, standing on the Past,
Gazing o'er the furthest Future deep into the stormy *Last;*
Gazing where on the remotest verge the nether mists are riven,—
A giant with an oak-tree staff, looking from sea-sands to heaven? [*Interlude of music.*
One dull day of indolence, the new-thatch'd city being all built,
On his sheath'd sword bent Quirinus, with his hand upon the hilt.
Round the sun's hid place on high all the stolid heaven was dead,
All the flat-floor'd earth below him look'd a temple domed with lead;

Not a voice from all the forests ! not a beam from all the floods !

Sadder for that early autumn, like cold sunshine, lit the woods.

Far, the arms of Latian hills held on high a city of power;

With the eye of lust Quirinus burnt its beauties tower by tower,

Till the conscious Latian hills, jealous of the conqueror's mien,

Proudly drew the mists of morning, decent, round the ravish'd scene.

Waking from the imperial dream, said Quirinus, looking towards Rome,

'So the mist of time descending hides me from the years to come !'

Near, below, a rushing torrent its long dance of beauty led,

And a forest-beast of grandeur cross'd it with a stately tread ;

Golden ran the rapid river gleaming though the skies were cold,

Far into the Sabine distance, mantling with its sands of gold.

Said Quirinus, sad, but proudly, gazing with a look sublime,

'Gods ! so fording life, would I send golden sands down streams of time ! '

He look'd up to heaven, and he look'd down upon the river strand :
Smiling through the crystal water, shining lay the untroubled sand.
Said Quirinus, proud, but sadly, gazing upon frith and firth,
'Gods ! so shall the tide of ages rase my footsteps from the earth !'
Sat the sun in his pavilion ; the dark drapery, stern and even,
Hanging earthward. Before noon the west winds dancing through high heaven,
Fill'd with sudden mirth, drew back the giant folds with hands profane ;
Pleased he saw the earth, and like a young hot prince began to reign.
All this while Quirinus bent heroic eyes that could not weep,
On a tear of dew that lay dull amid the grass asleep ;
Even while he gazed a sunbeam, slanting from its radiant path,
Dipt into the dew, and came forth like a goddess from the bath.
Then Quirinus—'That such lot were mine, ye arbiters afar !
Gods ! ye touch the sleeping water and it wakens to a star !'

While he looks the sun is higher, while he looks the star
grows old,
While he looks, the dews are lying, as the dews lie, dead
and cold.
Then Quirinus—all the hero looking sadness while he
said,
'Gods! so shall the sun of glory one day leave me cold
and dead!'
Then he gazed, as heroes gaze, upon whom,—conscious,
—earth and skies
Seem gazing back. To their live silence all his living soul
replies,
'Thou who knowest me, whom thus I know,—Eternal as
thou art,
Oh thou visible! how is it with me in thy silent heart?'
Then the rock beside him crumbled in the noon-heat stone
by stone,
'Gods! the very earth may rot ere a fame like mine be
grown!'
Then a salt wind—like a sea-ghost sick of land—faint
voices bore,
'Gods! but once to hear the ages booming on the future
shore!'
Then he look'd the sun in the face, like an eagle in his
death-sorrow.
'Gods! the very stars themselves are nearer to us than
to-morrow!'

Then in rapture, all the godhead of his line about his brow—
'Mother! Dionæan Mother! that the years to come were *now!*'
Soft Idalian incense laid him languid on the amorous sod.
At the softest a great thunder shook the mountain like a god.
Starting from the Paphian trance, the hero leap'd in the sunlight,
All his sudden soul o'erlooking the dull sense of mortal sight;
Staring, staring in the air, high over the Roman town,
Staring, staring pale and deadly where the future years came down.

Dost thou see them, as I see them, like a great mist sinking slow,
With the unborn dead o'er-pictured, and the things that shall be? Lo,
Woes that throw no shade on joy; joys that shed no light on woe,
Flush'd with being yet to be, full of soul that makes no sign,
Tarquin chaste beside Lucretia, Tullius mute by Catiline.

Dost thou see them, as I see them, like a haze upon the sky,

Painted with dumb agonies, and woes that neither strive
nor cry;
Spell-bound victors unpursuing, routed hosts that do not
fly;
Lifeless in the form of life, with ineffectual grandeur great,
As the foemen, Good and Ill, twin-slumber in the womb
of Fate?

Dost thou see them, as I see them, dread as when the
demon of rain
From cloudland verge shakes out a veil of storms across
the lower plain?
Dost thou see them, wider, wider, from the mountains to
the main,
Peopling, peopling either heaven, till troubled with the
infinite sight,
Both horizons flush'd at once attest them in distemper'd
light? [*Interlude of music.*

Dost thou see them, as I see them, like a great mist sink-
ing slow,
From the everlasting height, floating in celestial show,
Silent, vast, like heaven unroll'd, to the eternal hills
below?

Lo! they touch the earth. Ye Gods! are mine eye-balls
crazed with wine?
Shock of life, like midnight lightning, shouts along the
leaping line.

Lo! the children of the ages on the fields of fame beneath,
Each in clamour springs from sleep as one day he shall spring from death.

Gods! that cry of startled being! Gods! that din of life sublime,
Each convulsive form begins the many-colour'd work of time,
Each in agony of action flashes through his frenzied part,
As in deadly moments years of life gleam through the heaving heart,
Gods! I shall go wild with sight! Whirling arms and lambent eyes,
Raging, clash in sounds that mock the sadder surge of shrieks and sighs;
Each assumes the sudden future, each in turn defied defies,
Stream in air the Sabine tresses, Brutus strikes and Cæsar dies!
So some host of rayless meteors smite our air, and mad with might,
Burst in storms of stars, and charge in flaming legions through the night.
All this while Quirinus stood, wrapt as the Python, grand as Jove,
His face a microcosm, wherein the passions of the ages strove.

Downward, downward, solemn and slow, the dreamy
pageant dim descends,
A man's height upward life,—no more. In heaven the
dead, on earth the fiends.
Downward, downward, till the valley, line unconscious
line succeeds,
Mingling yet a moment lifeless with the life that strives
and bleeds.
See the insatiate plain engulf! See the still renew'd array,
Touching earth, explode with life, and hurtling sink out
of the day.
Gods! the tapestries of heaven o'erwrought with fate,
majestic, fell,
And burnt upon the earth, and dropt their flaming frag-
ments into hell!
See on high incessant hosts, to where the heavenly vistas
close,
And the very height of heights with a higher advent glows,
Dyed with change: as I have seen when wild meridian
moons are bright,
Stormy dreams of rainbows colour all the troubled soul
of night.
See below exhaustless life—hark the still-renewing roar
Of successive being kindling from the mountains to the
shore!
Tumult as of full-grown nations starting into crashing birth;
Tumult, tumult, wide as heaven, wild along the rocking
earth;

Tumult, tumult, from the dizzy maddening mounts' distracted crowd,
Pealing out till both horizons own it like a bloody cloud!
With such flame and thunder, in the Gallic madman's vision dark,
So the ordnance of the world, drawn up, might hail the Omniarch!
All this while Quirinus stood, gazing with a wilder gaze,
Heaving with a Delphic fury, shouting to the coming days!
Warm'd into the gait of time, he springs before the march of things,
Imperial with an age of empire, royal with a world of kings!
Stand, Quirinus! Hold thine own! Reel not, giant drunk with power!
Did no demigod come down to stay thee in that desperate hour,
When fortune blew her loudest blast, and, mindful of the ills in store,
Play'd a flourish ere she changed her awful stop for evermore;
And Rome, upon the hill of fame, above whose height the thunderer nods,
Culminated like a globe, and paused before the gasping gods,
Awhile in dreadful poise. One moment suns smiled on it dark and cold,
And lit a star. It shone. And then (like that tremendous stone of old)

Recoiling to infernal depths shook heaven, down-whirling
as it fell,
Through red storms of molten glories lash'd up from the
soil of hell!
How shalt *thou* behold that hour? for ah! the generous
and the brave
Spring upon the surge of fate, but ebb not with the ebbing
wave.
In that hour the Dionæan caught him up to heaven; that
he
Beholding as a god beholdeth, seeing, might survive to
see!

The Monk (*stepping forward*). Ye spell-bound men,
Who stand and stare each other in the face
As though it were an auspice, do you dare
Behold on earth what your translated Sire
Saw from the heavens? Didst thou not even there,
Oh hero! with thy strong humanities
Startle the impassive Gods; with mortal cries
Stir the still air of immortality,
And with thine earthly faculty of tears
Distain the empyrean?

[*Silence. They whisper among themselves.*

President. Sir, and brother,
Show us this vision.

The Monk. Doth the heart speak there?
Wot you there have been sights ere now which turn'd
The seer into stone? There have been words

Which made graves tenantless, and hunt the dead
Shrieking through hell. There have been tongues that smote
The lazy air wherein the gnat did dance,
And it hath dropp'd down molten on a soul,
And branded it for ever. You know this,
And you will hear?

A Shout. And we will hear!

The Monk. Your blood
Be on your heads!

A Shout. Be on our heads and thine!

The Monk. And mine. If ye be brothers, I shall die
With you, and if not, by you. Death is death.

[*He is silent.*

The President (*after awhile*). My brother, we attend thee.

The Monk. You will hear me?
You will behold? I do beseech that man
Who owns a faint heart, friends, to bear it forth
Beyond your patriot circle; half a bowshot
Will save him. I shall speak low. By the gods,
It should be sung in whispers.
What! not one?
What! you draw nearer? Be not rash, my brothers,
Those Cretan mazes that outlie the heart
Can no man tread so swiftly. I shall pause.

[*He is silent—then continues.*

It is a fearful thing to stand in the path
Of destiny. Here on this bridge am I,
And you, poor souls, upon the fateful bank
Roam up and down, and cast your wistful eyes
To the Cimmerian shores, whose twilight reign
Your sense, acclimated to Acheron,
Mistakes for day. I hold ye back, poor shades,
And with a right hand blister'd with the flames,
Point to a way of fire. You cannot see
The Elysian fields beyond it, and what god
Commands you to believe me?

My poor brothers,
Pass.

Some. This is madness!

Some. Hush! behold him.

Others. Wake,
Dreamer!

The Monk. I can see nothing in the heaven
Or earth why next year should be worse than this;
I do not learn from any sign in the sky
That you shall dance less lightly at the fair,
Or drink your pottle weaker at the wake,
Or find the wench less willing at the wedding,
Or sing less often in the castle hall,
Or think the rich man's nod a poorer fee,
Or sit less thankful at the menial's fare,
Or rear one chubby slave the less or more,

Or share their mother on worse usury
With yonder German——

Some. Shame——

Others. Hold !

Others. Are we clowns?

Others. Peace. Hear him out—hear the priest out. Down with him.

Hear him. Hear, hear, hear, hear him out. Down with him.

The Monk. 'Tis a hard fate. As yet you are not guilty ;

As yet the dull Maremma of the future
From the mephitic stagnance of the past
Stretches as unforbidden. But hear me,
And the Egyptian curse turns it to blood !
Yet you might tread it—with the march of life
Stir the pestiferous slime of days, till weak
Or sturdy vitals, soon or late, drop each
In his appointed hole. Why should I speak?
Friends, 'tis a fearful time. As yet your eyes
Have not been open'd to know good from evil.
The dread of the great hour before the fall
Gathers upon my soul. Now must I do
The miracle which paints the universe.
You stand before me here all men, all brothers,
And I must give you sight. And, seeing, he
Who is not straight transfigured to a saint,

Must blacken to a fiend. This is that water
That rots the adulteress—dare ye drink?
Some. Now mercy!
Others. Ay, ay, ay, to the dregs.
Others. Pour, priest, pour, pour.
One. S'death! do you mock us? Speak!
The Monk. I pray you, patience,
I pray you, patience. These are times, my brothers,
When the grand Roman habit is a dress
For no man's masquerade. [*They continue to shout.*]
Beseech you, patience,
Patience, sweet friends! The cap of liberty
Is not a carnival wear. There are laws, friends,—
You have not read them—they are writ in German,
But they are laws. And by the laws the blush
Of shame is disaffected and forbidden,
The proud tears of a patriot are not loyal,
The thoughts of good men are against the statute;
Who would speak like a freeman must content him
To walk a chain or two more like a slave.
I break no laws. I tell you by the laws
To inherit from your sires is robbery,
To think what you are thinking is rebellion,
To take the counsel of the brave is treason,
To strike a despot on his throne is death.
I do entreat you, friends, obey the laws!
If you were heroes I must hold my peace.
I should have sinn'd already. By the laws

You should not see this sight if you were heroes;
But slaves! behold!

[*The Monk sings.*

Some sad slow strain—
Deep wails and plaintive pain,
With thy most sorrowy soul, my harp, remember!
Hie where in some lone spot,
By the cold hearth of a forsaken cot,
A dying orphan cowers by the last ember!

To some unseen green space
Of a deserted place,
Where the pale grass and the lorn flowers are holy;
And of remorseless wrong,
In mournful gusts and long,
Winds cry at eve, where the betray'd lies lowly:

And with them, as they float—
The wail and the wind note—
Thy woes most sweet bewilderments entwine;
And, harp! thou hast not found
One desolate sad sound
That does not ring like laughter on a grief like mine.

My harp! how oft, when cold
And worn with cares untold,
With hearts untrue, stern looks, and sunless brows,
Thy first sweet breath that stole
Stirr'd incense in my soul,
Like the south wind among the myrtle boughs.

But there are in our lot
Thoughts where earth's sounds come not —
Like the eternal calm of the mid-seas—
And all that might have been
And all that is,—oh Queen
Of minstrelsy, thou hast no voice for these.

I hear, soul-wrapt, thy song
In stirring notes and strong,
High wandering in the years for ever flown;
To my exulting sight
The gorgeous Past comes bright!
In the broad earth too poor for her renown,
ITALIA, great and wise,
Sits, and to golden skies
Lifts the grand brow which clouds contend to crown.

But, oh! if in that hour
Of calm unchallenged power,
Some vision of prescient fate supreme
Forewarn her in mid-pride
Of all that must betide,
Who, who may sing the anguish of that dream?
Thy straining strings should start
As breaks her bursting heart,
And all thy broken chords confess the unconquer'd theme!

Return, my harp, return
Beside this broken urn,
Count the long days low lying where it lies;
Have all thy wandering will!
With fitful fancies fill
Long interludes of ill!
With sweeping blasts and strange unearthly cries,
Swift laughter, hurrying fears,
Madness, and joys, and tears,
And every mood that wayward wildness tries,
These are the winged years!
They pass. And where is she whose greatness claims
the skies?

Behold her! wan and fair,
Her pale arm soil'd and bare,
That trembles in the intolerable chain—
Behold the woes that rise
To her undying eyes,
Too proud to faint and too imperial to complain;
Behold her bend and grieve
From shameful morn to eve,
And till, with captive hands, the graves that hide her
Slain!

Behold the toil that lives
And strives, and sinks and strives!
Her outraged looks to every heaven addrest!

Her pride, grown fierce by fate,
Her mien deject and great,
Her violated bosom's wild unrest;
Behold her—travail-torn—
Endured but still unborne
Behold what fetters load her queenly breast.

Behold the glittering cares
Her brow, in mockery, wears,
The crowns of thorn and tinsel, tear-empearl'd;
Hark the unwonted names
That consummate her shames!
They dare not call her ROME—no, not down hurl'd
And chain'd!—lest at the sound
Each Vandal bond they bound
Fall from her and confess the empress of the world!

Thus with untiring plaint
How oft thy fancies paint
Each changing mood of her unchanging woe.
Before my sadden'd eyes
Obedient dolours rise,
A thousand subject passions pale and glow!
And each new wrong she bears
Thou actest in mine ears,
And ill complains to ill, and blow resounds to blow!

But what shall paint the power
Of that disastrous hour,
When coarse oppression struck with ruder hand,
And, at some worst disgrace,
She raised her bleeding face,
And saw with folded arms her sons consenting stand?

My harp! at that last gaze
Her eyes, dishonoured, raise,
Thou, with Timanthean woe grown utterless,
Changing the unequal key
Of slaves that might be free,
But rot and smile in unavenged duresse,
Thy descant of disdain
Loud liftest, till our pain
Shows us the shade of *her* ineffable distress.

Then the mists are breaking!
Then our hearts are waking!
We call her 'mother'! and she answers! Then
The blood that won these plains
Boils in our modern veins,
Years are unlived! Italia! once again,
Where thy proud eagles shine
All Roman, and all thine,
We rise and—bah! I dream'd that we were men!

[*Great confusion and outcry; in the midst of which the* MONK *disappears.*

SCENE VIII.

A DUNGEON.

The Monk, VITTORIO SANTO, *and a few of his chosen followers* (*among them* '*The Mother*' *of* SCENE VI.) *who are admitted to see him for the last time. They are conversing. His trial, by Austrian Court-martial, takes place at day-break.*

The Monk. I grant you there must be for every man
Some hill, plain, valley, or familiar tree,
Beside whose sweetness his young soul beholding,
Grew till the invisible within put on
The outward beauty. As your Roman mothers
Conceiving gazed upon their marble gods,
And brought forth sons like them. But if these homesteads
Contain that wealth of utterless affections,
Hopes, fears, traditions, duties, memories,
Inborn respects, instincts of good and evil,
That creature faith, that visible religion,
Which my soul utters when I say 'My country,'
Then the best sight makes the best citizen,
The horizon of our rights shuts in with age,
Each day of weeping leaves us less to weep for,
Infirmity makes outlaws, and the blind
Are aliens everywhere.

A Youth. Belovèd master,
For thus—sublime in the near neighbourhood
Of death—I must behold thee, even as men
On hill-tops seen against the heaven beyond
Seem giants——

The Monk. Friend, forbear. Who made me ruler
And judge among you—or who gave thee licence
To be a slave? Beloved, thou art young: the time
May come when thou shalt tremble to create
Or to depose a master. In dominion—
The universal idol—the world worships
The unknown God. Sometimes in these last hours
I have had visions of a more divine
Iconoclast, who shall demand, 'Will God
Be worshipp'd in the noblest image?' Let
That pass. I feel it has not pass'd for ever.
Meanwhile learn this. Drawing near authority
To make or to unmake—Man, put thy shoes
From off thy feet, for the place where thou standest
Is holy ground.

A Friend. Who then shall dare rebel?

The Monk. Well ask'd, brave patriot, where is that blasphemer
Who dares rebel? Let us obey. But, Roman,
Shall we obey the living or the dead?
'The powers that be!' By what sign will ye know
The *powers* that be? My friends, we are the fools
Of eyesight and the earthly habitudes

Which cannot look aloft. Walking the plank
Of life o'er the abyss, we fear to glance
Or upward to the stars, or downward to the grave.
Our souls, yoke-strain'd, in attitude of toil
Bend earthward. Oft the *un*worshipp'd angel passeth
While we, with eyes fix'd on the ground from which
We came, adore his footsteps in the sand.
And God, this while, is in the heaven of heavens!
Stand! Christian! thou who hastest towards a throne
By that old pathway which our fathers wore
When a *king* sat there. Traitor! yon blood-stain'd
Mad sans-culotte, whose godless feet are rattling
Among kings' bones,—yon vulture of the nations,
Yelling instinctive through the fateful air
To deathstruck dynasties,—yon maniac serf
Ringing his broken chains, and piling, wild
With freedom, hills of courtly slain to reach
The thronèd effigy to which thou kneelest,
And strew the imperial tatters to the wind—
That outlaw is no *rebel!* What art *thou*
Who bendest to the empty rags which once
Enrobed dominion, and with stiff knee passest
That uncrown'd presence, unbegilt, unfeather'd
Naked and full of God, whose step disturbs
The centre of the world?

Friends! Gessler's hat
Two centuries hence had more divinity
Than any crown to-day. Is aught on earth

Eternal? Man has rights; but is a corpse
A man? Doth the heir rob the dead? The stars
Themselves burn out. Spring, summer, autumn, winter,
Each traitor to the past, and each in turn
To its own season loyal. Are these things
Dumb? Look on high. That which you call *rebellion*
Is but the changed obedience which we pay
To changing dispensations. The true rebel
Is he who worships for the powers *that are*
Powers *that are not.*

Enter a Jailor secretly disposed to favour the Monk.

Jailor. The hour, most reverend Sir,
Of which you bade me warn you, struck but now.
One more is all the grace I dare. Even that
Discover'd, would be bought with all my own.

The Monk. Good friend, we thank thee. Did we not know, jailor,
That the time cometh when to have done this service
To these and me this night shall more avail thee
Than an imperial signet, we would speak
Of recompence. Yet wear this, [*taking a ring from his finger,*] and forget not
When it was given and why. Enough. We count
The moments.
Gentle Romans, when ye enter
The land of milk and honey, recollect
That God spared Rahab. The great day of reckoning

Is not so far hence that ye shall forget
Vittorio Santo's keeper.
A Friend. Show me why
It does not dawn to-morrow. 'T may suit well
Thy monk's disguise to draw the sword of the Spirit,
And wrestle not with flesh and blood, but hath
Rome one arm only? How shall he whose tongue
Fate hung awry be eloquent? My comrades,
Thus! [*with a gesture*]. In truth, Santo, my right worthy friend,
Methinks thou hast even offer'd up thyself
And thy good cause on a cold altar——
The Monk. So
Did Abel.
The Friend. Yes, 'tis well, 'tis very well,
Noble no doubt and wondrous heavenly, but——
An elder Friend. Peace, stripling! Friend revered, thou hast wrought out
Thy chosen path to freedom. It ends here.
The Monk (*pointing up*). THERE. I am no such royal guest, dear Cosmo,
But I can stand a moment at the gate.
Cosmo. We, reverent of thy martyr zeal, but hearing
A voice which calls us by a shorter road
To be cut out by hands, ask if the sword
That patriot draws be guilty?
The Monk. When the Baptist
Call'd to repentance, did he weigh the dust

And measure out the sackcloth? Let a prophet
Wait upon silence. Who can hold his peace
Hath said his message. Things that once have dwelt
In heaven will make that prison, a man's heart,
Glad to release them. Let the seer see
And he will cry. Herein I have not seen.
The image that for me fills earth and heaven
Shuts out the shapes beyond.

A Woman (*'The Mother' in Scene* VI.) Yet, father,
—oh
Let me still call thee so!—are there not hard
Unripen'd times, when the gold sickle of angels
Reaps not the harvest—early dawns of truth,
When we must burn a grosser light than day?

The Monk. If the true man were of the world, and
had
The sun of his great orbit in its centre,
And kept the measure of its seasons, then,
Daughter, thou hadst said well. But he who steps
Forth from the radiant chambers of the future
To show us how the unseen ages look;
He who comes forth a voluntary hostage
Of the supreme good-will of times to come;
He who grew up among your children's children,
And calls by name the years you never knew;
He who takes counsel of the things that yet
Are not, and answers with his kindling eyes
Questions ye cannot hear; he who is set

Among us pigmies, with a heavenlier stature
And brighter face than ours, that we must leap
Even to smite it,—that man, friends, must have
The self-existence of a god. From him
The poor necessities, hopes, fears, and fashions
Of the expedient Present, fall like waves
From adamant. Friends! learn a prophet's patience.
Do you remember how, in backward years,
Night after night the patient harvest-moon
Climbs her high seat above the silent fields,
In act to reign? Bating no majesty
For her great solitude. Unmann'd, below,
The golden plenty spreads, unwarn'd of change,
Ample repose. From corn-crown'd hill to hill,
From waving slope to slope, where sickly winds
Disturb'd flit blind from sudden sleep to sleep,
From calm auriferous deeps and from the broad
Pale distance, drowsy in the genial light,
From all the dull expanse of voiceless plains,
O'er which, unscared, the midnight curlew cries,
No answering horn salutes her. Smile on, pale,
Prophetic queen! Know ere thy wane, thine hosts,
Thy sounding hosts, shall darken all the vales!
Not otherwise the poet and the prophet,
The patriot and the sage.

The Youth. This is well said.
And if we desperate men had calm or leisure
To seek the fruit of knowledge where it hangs

Through all the fair wide gardens of the soul,
Doubtless 'twere reverend idlesse. But, good Sir,
A partisan in war time must needs carry
His daily meed of duty in his hand.
We have no time—we freemen——
The Monk. Ah, young friend,
Dost *thou* too die to-morrow?
Gonzalo (*a friend*). Noble Sir,
Forgive him!
The Monk. He spake not amiss, Gonzalo,
A little out of tune, no more. I thank him.
And if I could dismiss you from this last
Communion, with no ampler utterance
Than yet hath pass'd between us; if I left you
Here upon earth, and with the clouds above,
To the dim sayings of the sibylline stars,
And now, at midnight, gave your tear-blind eyes
No compass but the land-marks, which serve angels
Journeying heaven and earth, Rezzio's rebuke
Flying before would shut against my soul
The gates of paradise. I have come short
Of my high calling, friends, but (I thank God)
Not thus far. The old Castellan, just now,
Came not unbidden. I desired, my brethren,
To ask of you, this our last mutual hour,
A death gift,—if you like it—laid upon
My funeral pile. Somewhat I had to say.
A Friend (*aside*). Son.

The Son (*aside*). Father.
The Friend (*aside*). Mine own chaplain—hasten——
The Monk (*observing them*). Marquis,
Are we such strangers? Sirs, ye do me wrong.
What chrysm can hold, what hand of flesh can spread
The unction of a soul? I bear in me
The priesthood of a Christian man, and do
My own death-rites. What sins I have, are written
On high: and that angelic record needs
No death-bed supplement. Son! let us brighten
This last best hour with thoughts that shining through
To-morrow's tears shall set in our worst cloud
The bow of promise. In my life, long past,
There is a passage, friends, which set apart
From our rich confidence, I have reserved
As burden for this hour. Ye are just, brethren,
And will believe me that I dig this dust
Of personal remembrance as the sands
Of golden shores. In giving you the wisdom
Which I received, and now commit to your
Chaste hands, with prayers ye may be better stewards,
I wish, if I may speak thus, to transplant,
Not the fruit only, but the tree whereon
It grew; that so they may have life in you,
Unto a goodlier increase. And for this
Awful and mystic husbandry I chose
The climate of the grave. And if, dear friends,
I stray some moments from my history,

Through the sideways of sterile circumstance,
Be gracious to the old man garrulous.
The *old man*, friends. Age is the shadow of death,
Cast where he standeth in the radiant path
Of each man's immortality. What age,
To the dumb infant of eternity,
Bring threescore years and ten? Brother Gonzalo,
Prithee that prison water-jar. My lips
Are feverish with to-morrow. [*He drinks.*
Wells the spring
Pure even here? Oh nature, nature, thou
Hast done thy part! Thanks, gentle friends.
Now, soul,
I turn thee loose among the fields of old. [*He pauses.*

Imperial Summer in hot luxury
Reign'd like a new-crown'd caliph. Heavy Noon,
Golden and dead-asleep, oppressive lay,
Athwart the sated world. I, book in hand,
Wander'd since dawn, it was my wont, those fair
Campanian fields where ancient poets went
To learn the fragrance of ambrosial air,
And every nymph was Hebe—but where now,
When the serf makes his lair where Romans dwelt,
Nature, disdainful of the hideous trespass,
Teaches, retributive, the wasting cheek
How slaves should look. From early morn to eve
My feet had roam'd these plains, my heart the ages.

And burden'd with the brightness of the hour,
I sought the shade which old Vespasian built.
Those walls which, lest degenerate tongues disturb
The indignant dead, we call the Coliseum—
Those wondrous walls which, like the monument
Of some old city of the plague, stand up
Mighty in strength and ruin, with no more
Decay than serves for epitaph, and takes
Impiety from pride, and breaks the crown'd
Pillar of triumph on the conqueror's grave.
Those walls whose grey infirmities seem only
The mood of an imperishable face,
Awful as scars upon a Titan's brow,
Dread as a strong man's tears. Small marvel, truly,
With that eternal witness looking on,
That thou, Campagna! art for very shame
True to the days of old!
Entering, I sat
Refresh'd in shadow, and like some high wizard,
In wayward hour, call'd with a god's caprice
Spirits of new and old. In that doom-ring
Of time, who would not be magician? Now,
I sought old chronicles for Nero's house,
That golden crown that made mount Palatine
Royal. And those imperial halls wherein
Cæsar is still august. Now, pensive, sitting
Within the very shade of destiny,
I saw their ruins strew the hills of Rome.

And looking forth through rents, by which the years
Pass in and out, I gazed as one should gaze
Upon some battle-field of the old gods.
And the Olympian slain lay there, unearth'd,
With whitening limbs—like bark'd oaks, thunder-scarr'd,
Loading the fearful ground, ghastly and gaunt,
In all the dreadful attitudes of death.
So sojourning—a pilgrim of the past—
Kind sleep o'ertook me, travel-worn of soul.
My eyes, unconscious, closed to scenes without,
And at a shout I opened them within
Upon the world of dreams. With strange recoil
As at a nod, the extended scroll of time
Roll'd up full fifteen ages. That Honorius
Who cut the world in two, gave holiday
To all the pride of Rome. The new arena,
(For in old Rome three hundred years seem'd new,)
Which great Vespasian, working for all time,
Built up with Jewish hands, (as he would sweat
Their immortality into the stone,)
Teem'd to the parapet. The sun of noon
Shed golden evening through a silken heaven,
Fair floating, which for clouds received the incense
Of all the Arabies. Luxurious art
Ensnared the unwilling winds, and like toil'd eagles,
Held them through all the hot Italian day,
Flapping cool pleasures. Ever falling-waters
Solaced the ear, themselves beheld through fragrance,

Till the lapp'd sense in soft confusion own'd
Redolent light. Behind a hedge of gold
In the elysian field, imperial state
Purpled the ring. High, high, and higher rose
The babel tower of heap'd up life, and o'er
This strange rich arras, rainbow-hued and vast,
The eternal marble, imminent, look'd down,
And the cyclopean mass of the huge walls
Frown'd from the arches. And before their stern
And monumental grandeur, the up-piled
Mortality was as this hand beside
This rock-hewn dungeon. In the midst stand I,
On that tremendous theatre condemn'd
To play the last red scene of a short life,
Lest Cæsar yawn. You heavens!
While I draw sword
And do the hideous courtesies of war,
My senses, quick with fate, learn all the scene,
And snuff, prescient, on the heavy air
The perfumed death. My foe, a Spartacus
In make and weapon, took with careless scorn
The languid challenge; and with his flat sword
Spurn'd me to action. So have I beheld
At the unequal pleasure of the winds,
Some poplar giant—tyrant of the plain—
Fall foul of some slim cypress. Point to point,
And blade to blade, and hilt to hilt opposed,
The glittering mazes of the gleaming glaive

Coil and recoil. The waxing strife has shrunk
The earth to standing-ground. The whole wrapt being
Sent hot into the hand, spares not one sense
Beyond the sword-arm's circle. Into which
Half-understood, the dreadful seas of clamour
Thunder their surges. So, meseems, a soul
Falling through mid-space hears the passing shout
Of unseen worlds. And now the giant, stung,
Casts off his sword craft. Striding like a storm,
Uproots me, lightening. See my blade fly up
Like a flung torch; myself into the dust
Hurl'd like a spear; and the Goliath folding
His untask'd arms upon his unbreathed breast,
Look up without a flush for the well-known
Signal of doom. Two hundred thousand hands
Gave it. He saw. While the sword rose and fell,
Up from the podium to the beetling height
I turn'd one dying look to the mute nation
Which—stretching neck and nerve with sanguine strain
To catch the bloody joy—through all its legions
Held such a stifled horrible expectance,
As if the greed of anguish could not spare
The groan a sigh might cover. Round the vast
O'er-peopled hell the terrible haste of death
Took my mad eyes, and, in the indistinct
Wild glance, its serried thousands glared on me
Like one tremendous face.

Consenting sat

That day, all that the world most loved, fear'd, worshipp'd.
Sages whose household words, caught up, made proverbs
For far-off nations; grey proconsuls, warriors
Whose mere names stood for victory in all
The tongues of Europe; senators whose title
Ennobled kings; priests of all orders, bishops
Whose heavenly treasure was not lent, as yet,
To earthly usury; great merchants, men
Who dealt in kingdoms; ruddy aruspex,
And pale philosopher, who bent beneath
The keys of wisdom; artists, and whatever
In Rome claimed to be poet; woman, too,
And passing fair,—not that mine eye had note
Of any separate loveliness, or knew
More than a sense of exquisite relief,
A more or less in hate, an intuition
That in the living mountain which rose round
All was not adamant; a milder mood
In a most terrible destiny. I saw it,
As when upon the fretful parapet
Of some vast cloud that doth engird the west,
Flush'd and distemper'd with the angry hues
Of passionate sunset, oft at eve there shineth
A line of purer light. All these sat there
Consenting, and with them the purple pride
To which all these bow'd down;—and I must die.
Swept through the silence a great wind of voices,

'Look to the podium!' Breaking from the ranks
A Christian priest—I knew him by his habit—
Cleaves the gold fences,—lion-proof—with more
Than lion's heart, and, as the sword fell, stands
'Twixt me and slaughter. Abdiel with such gesture
Held Satan off. The rude barbarian, scorning
The feeble game, flings down his sword. That moment
Methought hell burst, and in a death-trance heard I
The outcry of the damn'd. The observant host
Rose like the simultaneous tide when hid
Volcanos heave the ocean, and a long
Vast wave engulfs an island. Not the war
Even of those seas drowning the blasphemies
Of shrieking sinking cities, storms the ear
Like what I heard. Tremendous rushing life
Yell'd round the place, and, as the howling vortex
Belch'd up its sounds, the screaming horrors struck
The impassive walls, and like caged fiends came back
Convulsed with madness. Then the tempest turns
Inwards, and with one gust, as at a sign,
Guts the stone entrails of the awful tower
In whirlwind of revenge. Like an explosion
Down hails the hurricane fury. So Vesuvius
With mountains wrench'd from her own bowels, piles
Shouting the blasted plain.
Slain, slain and buried
By the same act, under one terrible heap
Lay martyr, victor, vanquish'd. Last to die

I felt the growing weight and heard through all
The exulting thousands. How the sounds dash'd down
Like stamping furies. Here the vision ends:
With the death-pang I woke.
Absolute calm,
A silence like the silence of the desert,
Silence beyond repose, lone, lifeless, stagnant,
Muter than any grave. Silence too dead
For living tongue to name. Silence more placid
Than peace or night or death; (for these are strings
Unstruck but to be stricken;) idiot silence,
Sterile, and blank, and blind. A breathless pause
In heaven and earth; held till the moving thought
Seems turbulence, this human nature grows
Unseemly on us, our life's common functions
Impertinent and gross, and conscious cheeks
Excuse the beating heart with blushes. Silence
As of a listening world. Such strange defect,
Such lean and hungry quiet, such keen sense
Of absence grown effectual, that the ear
Faints as for breath, and even the very substance
Of latent sound seems dead. Alas! for language,
We sing the healing darkness of sweet night,
But for Egyptian darkness that was felt
Have names no blacker. When *you* speak of silence,
'Tis as the sweet content of voiceless woods
After the nightingale—as the home-genius
Sole watching by the sleep of happy babes

With finger at her lip, and shows of stillness,
Meanwhile the sleeper smileth and the air
Stirs with dream-music. When *I* use the word
Think of some other silence. In that other
I woke.
From sound to stillness as when stormy hearts
In passion break. From tempest to dead calm,
As when at some strange portent clashing hosts
Halt in mid-shock. From all to nothingness,
A soul from chaos shot into the void
Beyond the universe.
In my short rest
From imminent heights, the dust of slow decay—
Sands from the glass of time shaken of winds—
Crumbs from the feast of desolation—strew'd
My slumbering face upturn'd. The Gorgon Sleep
Made them a shower of stones. My wondering eyes
O'er-charged with sense, in shuddering unbelief
Unclose upon the lone inane expanse
Of summer turf, from which the mouldering walls
Shut not the sunshine; like a green still lake
Girt by decaying hills. Urging my gaze
Round the tremendous circle, arch on arch,
And pile on pile, that tired the travell'd eye,
I saw the yawning jaws and sightless sockets
Gape to the heedless air. Like the death's-head
Of buried empire. And the sun shone through them
With calm avoidance that left them more dark,

And pleasured him with some small daisy's face
Grass-grown. As though even from the carrion of gods,
The instinct of the living universe
Held heaven and earth aloof. All through the lorn
Vacuity winds came and went, but stirr'd
Only the flowers of yesterday. Upstood
The hoar unconscious walls, bisson and bare,
Like an old man deaf, blind, and grey, in whom
The years of old stand in the sun and murmur
Of childhood and the dead. From parapets
Where the sky rests, from broken niches—each
More than Olympus,—for gods dwelt in them,—
Below from senatorial haunts and seats
Imperial, where the ever-passing fates
Wore out the stone, strange hermit birds croak'd forth
Sorrowful sounds, like watchers on the height
Crying the hours of ruin. When the clouds
Dress'd every myrtle on the walls in mourning
With calm prerogative the eternal pile
Impassive shone with the unearthly light
Of immortality. When conquering suns
Triumph'd in jubilant earth, it stood out dark
With thoughts of ages: like some mighty captive
Upon his deathbed in a Christian land,
And lying, through the chant of Psalm and Creed
Unshriven and stern, with peace upon his brow,
And on his lips strange gods.

Rank weeds and grasses,

Careless and nodding, grew, and asked no leave,
Where Romans trembled. Where the wreck was saddest
Sweet pensive herbs, that had been gay elsewhere,
With conscious mien of place rose tall and still,
And bent with duty. Like some village children
Who found a dead king on a battle-field,
And with decorous care and reverent pity
Composed the lordly ruin, and sat down
Grave without tears. At length the giant lay,
And everywhere he was begirt with years,
And everywhere the torn and mouldering Past
Hung with the ivy. For Time, smit with honour
Of what he slew, cast his own mantle on him,
That none should mock the dead.

Oh, Solitude,
What dost thou here? Where are those legions? They
Were men, not spirits. Where those shouts that like
Wild waves upen a low lee shore, but now
Lash'd me to death? Thou Earth, where didst thou quake
When they went down? Was it that shock, oh Earth,
That left these ruins? Crying thus, I ponder'd
The subject of my dream. Beside me still
Lay that old chronicle whence, as from some
Quaint ancient banquet-hall, a gorgeous bevy
Of gods and men had pass'd forth with my soul
Into sleep's stranger pleasaunce, and thence straying
Wander'd the world. The open page, held wide

By my stretch'd slumbering arm, interpreted
The vision. There my waking eyes had closed.
'Twas where Honorius on a high day gives
Games to great Rome; and one unfriended priest,
Telemachus by name, soul-stricken, leaps
The circus fences, and in mid-arena
Stays the unholy combat, and dies there,
Stoned by the people. When he walk'd through Rome
That morning, no man turned to gaze on him.
He had no friend, no mistress, no disciple,
No power, fame, fortune, wealth, or human cunning,
And hath no record upon earth but this,
That he died there. Yet those walls where he suffer'd—
Those great imperial monumental walls
Built to feast nations in for ever—stand
From that day tenantless. In that man's blood
Baptized to ruin. Then my heart cried out,
Herein, oh prophet, learn a prophet's duty!
For this cause is he born, and for this cause,
For this cause comes he to the world—*to bear*
Witness. Oh God-ordain'd! thine hands are God's!
Sully them not. The days shall come when men
Who would be angels shall look back to see
What thou wert. Live for them. Speak, speak thy message;
The world runs post for thee. The good by nature,
The bad by fate;—whom the avenging gods
Having condemn'd have first demented. Know

By virtue of that madness they are thine.
Lay-brothers working where the sanctity
Of thine high office comes not. Savage friends
Who, scattering in their wrath thy beacon, light
The fire that clears the wilderness. Unconscious
Disciples, writing up the martyr's title
In Hebrew, Greek, and Latin on his cross.
Love him who loves thee; his sweet love hath bought
A place in heaven. But love him more who hates,
For he dares hell to serve thee. Pray for him
Who hears thee gladly; it shall be remember'd
On high. But, martyr! count thy debt the greater
To the reviler; *he* hath bought thy triumph
With his own soul. In all thy toils forget not
That whoso sheddeth his life's blood for thee
Is a good lover; but thy great apostle,
Thy ministering spirit, thy spell-bound
World-working giant, thy head hierophant
And everlasting high priest, is that sinner
Who sheds thine own.

A Friend. Alas!

Another. 'Tis a hard saying,
Who can hear it?

SCENE IX.

THE TRIAL.

An Austrian Court-martial. A number of Officers as Judges. An empty chair for the President, who enters during the proceedings. A subordinate Officer prosecutes. Various Witnesses. A great crowd of Auditors. The Monk stands in the midst with an abstracted air, murmuring to himself.

Prosecutor. The court has heard the minstrel,
Henri de Jaloux; the most reverend father,
Ghiotto Ingordo; and the rustic crowd
Brought under guard from Milan.
Noble Sirs,
Will't please you listen to an aged witness,
A simple man, but of a good report,
And grey in loyalty. Codardo Goffo,
Stand forth! Now worthy Goffo, of what crime
Dost thou here charge the prisoner?——
A Judge. Speak, old man!
Old Goffo. So please you, I was working in the fields;
I serve my lord our bishop—and our bull,
Mad with the fly—for, an it please your worships,
Since I drove plough, which will be thirty year

Come Martinmas, for an it please your worships,
My lord the bishop's land—not that I say it
For any ill-will to my lord the bishop—
But so it is—your worships please to ask
Giacchimo,—*young* Giacchimo—(poor old Giacch,
We wore him out.) Your worships, 'tis no use
Denying it. But as I say, our bull
Curst with the midge——

Prosecutor Speak to the case, old man,
You see the prisoner!

Old Goffo. Ay, Sir, ay. Our bull,
Bit like a loach——

A Judge. Wake up, thou prating loon,
Or have thine ears slit! To the case, I say,
And leave this babble!

Old Goffo. Good, your worships, yes.
Where was I, please your worships? Ay. Our bull——

A Judge. Silence!

Another Judge. Nay, Colonel, let him on. Well, sirrah!

Old Goffo. Our bull, your worship—I am seventy year
And more, but let me see the beast, your worship,
That throws me, bull or cow, with a fair odds.
But, as I say, our Lammas calf—a better
Never suck'd dam—'twas eight weeks old that day,
Had took the murrain—as it might be here—
I made a shift—my poor old back, your worships!

And knelt to feed it; when up comes our bull,
And down I am. Not that I think, your worships,——

A Judge. Babbling old man, hear me. Answer me shortly
What I shall ask thee. Jailor, heat thine irons,
And burn his tongue out if he fails. Now, sirrah,
What of this man?

Old Goffo. Please you, my lord, he came—
Not that I ever saw him till that hour—
My lord, I am a poor old man, my lords,
I am a very poor old man—the bishop——

A Judge. Silence! the prisoner saved you? Is it so?

Old Goffo. Please you, my lord, he did, my lord——

A Judge. And you?

Old Goffo. My lords, it was the only piece I had—
By all the saints!—nay, pray, your worships, mercy,
A poor old man! I meant to pay it back—
My lord the bishop's steward that same day,
Says he, Go buy——

A Judge. Enough! you gave the prisoner
A coin—and why?

Old Goffo. An offering, please your worships,
An old man's life is sweet—I swear, my lords,
Only an offering—nay——

Another Judge. Piously done!
Speak up, good man! The prisoner took it?

Old Goffo. Ah,

Sirs, that an honest man who served his bishop
Good sixty year—nay, I might say, your worships,
Sixty and one : at Martinmas—I mind it
Well—I was hired. My mother—rest her soul,
She was a mother, sirs,—she says—says she——
A Judge. Jailor, your irons !
Old Goffo. Mercy, oh, my lords,
I will speak—mercy, oh, my lords——
A Judge. Hear me.
Say yes or no. The prisoner kept your coin ?
Old Goffo. No, please my lord.
A Judge. *No*, sirrah ? How ?
Old Goffo. Nay, mercy !
My lords, I will tell all.
Judge. Peace, fool, say on.
Old Goffo. Please you, he flung it on the ground, and stamp'd it
Like any ram—my lords—as I stand here,—
And said——
Judge. Ay, tell us what he said.
Old Goffo. My lords,
I am a very feeble poor old man,
I pray your worships mercy—on my knees—
My lords—my youngest girl left one small child,
For pity's sake, my lords, remember it,—
My youngest daughter, please your worships,—she
Left him to me—for pity's sake, my lords,
My lords, for pity's sake !

A Judge. Is there none here
Who will interpret this strange witness?
Prosecutor. Sir,
The poor half-witted dotard fears to be
Confounded with his benefactor. I,
Marshalling the evidence, heard this from him,
That when the prisoner saw the superscription
And image of my lord the duke, he spurn'd
The money, and declared that masses bought
With king-stamp'd price purchased the soul for hell,
With sundry other ravings, treating of
Rome and Republics.
A Judge. I this so?
Old Goffo. My lords,
'Tis very true.
President (*who enters*). Eh—eh—why this is treason,
Treason—eh—said he so?—honest old man,
Speak on—he told thee—eh—yes, yes, he told thee
All kinds of things—eh—yes—to slay the bishop,
Speak out—fear not—to slay the bishop—eh?——
Old Goffo. My lords, as I shall answer on my soul,
He said not so; rather, my lords, he bade——
President. There, get you gone—there, get you gone——
Prosecutor. Call up
Signor Pulito Mansueto. Now, Sir,
What say you?
Mansueto. Sir, I have a son. The son

Of my grey widowhood. To whose dear tune
I have so play'd my life, in the dim future
Of my old heart I own no single hope
That has not all his features. What he was
To me, a daughter seem'd to my rich neighbour,
Worthy Antonio; and wherein my son
Fail'd of perfection's stature, it did show
Complete in her. Antonio and I,
Old schoolfellows—had mark'd them for each other,
Well pleased to make our dynasties shake hands
When we might greet no longer.
That their love
Should have run smoothly in the golden channels
Made by the hands that made them, Sir, what father
Will doubt? Sirs, where my garden joins the fields
Low in the vale, no hedge shuts out the fairies,
But Art and Nature, intimately sweet,
Exchange their beauties. Fond amidst them runs
A brook, that like some babbling child between
Two bashful lovers, telling tales to each,
Perfects their friendship. Bowering all the way
With equal joy, they clothe it, and in love
Shut out the very sun. Hither my boy
Came oft, at noon, to sing and meditate
Antonio's daughter :—his sole confidante
An ancient dulcimer, the quaint strange spoil
Of some old disinterrèd city. Here,
Good Sirs, this traitor met him, and did use—

So I learn now—to sing his witchcraft to him,
Discoursing much of other mistresses,
Freedom and Rome—(the Mussulman) : in fine,
My son, beguiled, Sirs, by this sorcerer's spell,
Slighted Antonio's daughter, and is gone
I know not whither.

A Judge. Is it likely, friend,
The poison wrought no further? Had this knave
No monetary service of your son?
Had he——

President. Eh—money—eh—old gentleman?
What? Did he rob you?

Mansueto. On my honour, *no*.
My child, Sir, is no felon. He took nothing
But his old lyre. Nay, now you urge my thought,
There was an ancient toga which had hung
With other Roman relics in my hall,
He took that with him. And God bless him with it!
Sir, I am not a seer, but methinks
Your house is childless.

Prosecutor. Call Capo di Matti!
Now, Matti, what are you?

Matti. My lords, I am,
Or was, my lords, of late, house-steward to
My lord the marquis.

A Judge. And you know this man?

President. Eh—eh—you know him? Look the man in the face.

Turn about, prisoner! Eh, you dog——
Matti. My lords,
He was a frequent guest where I have served,
A very turbulent fellow, good my lords,
And dangerous to the state.
A Judge. And in your business——
President. Eh—yes, your business—eh? your daily business
At table, eh? and so forth. You have heard—
Speak up, Sir, you have heard?
Matti. As this, my lords.
His manner was to say with many words,
Your worships have no right in Italy,
No, not so much as to the ground you stand on.
Then 'twas his pleasure to revile crown'd heads;
His highness is no duke,—his majesty
No emperor or king,—my lord the pope—
A Catholic tongue, my lords, may not deliver
His awful discourse of my lord the pope!
But most, my lords, it was his wont to boast
Of some strange secret known to himself only,
To sweep your worships from this land, without
Gun, sword, or pistol. Which, my lords, I hold
To be some compound hot and devilish
Of his black art. My lords, I know the time
When I have sick'd to hear him. Once, my lords,
As I shall answer on my sinful soul,
The prisoner promised my late lord, the marquis,

To show him all his secret after dinner,
I' the garden house. My lords, some said that eve
It thunder'd. I knew better.

A Judge. This is fearful.
Well, Sir,——

Matti. And, please our lordships, at my lord's
He wore no cowl—my lords, he is no priest—
This gown, my lords, is worn the better to carry
His villanous compound. I have heard him say so.

A Judge. Heaven and earth!

President. What? What? not a priest, and wear
Priest's clothes? Why, blasphemy—eh? Blasphemy,
Rank blasphemy—put it down so.

A Judge. Well, fellow,
This shall be thought on.

Matti. I do fear to say
What more I heard.

A Judge. Speak out!

Another. Sirrah, thine oath!

Matti. Nay then, my lords, nay, to say truth, my lords,
A man is none the worse for what he hears—
Or you, my lords——

A Judge. Speak to the point!

Matti. My lords,
Am I held guiltless?—Servants have their duties——

A Judge. Speak out, I say.

Matti. My lords, it seems to pass

Man's wickedness—but, as I hope to see
Heaven and the blessed, this man hath conspired
To level every city, small and great,
In all this land save one. Sirs, take it down,
I swear, my lords, even to the very words
A hundred times repeated, till my knees
Shook to stand by—'*Rome all, Rome only*,' so
He phrased it. I speak true, my lords——
Prosecutor. The Court
Shall hear a confirmation. You may go.
Stand up, Bugiardo Sporco, serving-man
To the aforesaid marquis——
A Voice from the Crowd. But discharged
(Let the Court take good note of it) for lying,
Theft, and adultery.
Prosecutor. Silence! my lord marquis.
Now, fellow, have you heard ill of this prisoner?
Sporco. Times out of mind, my lord.
A Judge. Tell what was wont
To be his converse at your master's table.
Sporco. First and foremost, to cut all Austrian throats—
Pillage all churches—ravish all the women,
And hold them afterwards in common; ten
To each man. Then he had a plan to roast——
Shouts from the Crowd. Down with the rascal! kill him where he stands.
Stones! Stones! Stones!

A Judge. Soldiers, save the witness.

Another. Charge
This rabble.

A Friend of the Monk's. Peace, good people.

The Crowd. Peace! peace! peace!

Prosecutor. Call up——

A Judge. The Court is satisfied. Arraign
The prisoner.

An Officer. How say'st thou, Vittorio Santo,
Sometime, but falsely, self-styled Monk of Jesus,
And now on trial. Thou hast had free hearing
Of thine accusers. Speak. Guilty ot not?

The Monk (*musing*). 'It is in vain to rise up early, to sit
Up late, to eat the bread of sorrows. So
He giveth His beloved rest.'

Officer. Vittorio Santo! self-styled Monk of Jesus,
Guilty or not? Answer!

The Monk (*musing*). You, you that cry
'How long?' be patient; is not your heaven sweet?

Officer. Vittorio Santo—self-styled Monk of Jesus,
Guilty or not?

The Monk (*musing*). Brother! it is thy voice;
'Twas well of thee, my brother! to speak now.
The home, the plain, the column by the tower,
Sickness, thy love, loss, death: the revelation,
Resolve, thought, labour, disappointment, triumph,
And now the end. Yes, it was well, my brother!

A Judge. Shout in his ear. Smite him, ye drowsy guards.
What! shall this slave despise us? Corporal, hither!
Thou hast a voice, cry out, 'Vittorio Santo,
Guilty or not?'
Corporal (*shouts*). Santo! Vittorio Santo!
Guilty or not?
The Monk. I am a Roman. Find me
A judge and I refuse not to be tried.
Prosecutor. Traitor! thou standest at the judgment-seat
Of Wollustling von Bauerhund von Bosen,
Baron of Herrschwuth and Scheinheiligkeit,
Count d'Omicidio, Marshal in the armies
Of that dread sovereign Apostolical
Our Liege and thine—the imperial Ferdinand,
Emperor of Austria—King——
The Monk. Peace! I have heard
His titles. Find me, friend, a judge, and I
Refuse not to be tried.
The President. A judge! eh? what?
A judge—eh—are we not a judge? eh? what?
Nay, pull his cowl about his face! There! flout him!
Spit at him! Dog! Nay, we will teach thee, cur!
A judge forsooth! Pluck the mad priest by the nose;
Nay, not a judge? Then hear thy sentence——
The Monk. Spare
Thy lips, for I appeal.

President. Appeal, appeal,
Nay, he appeals, the dog! Appeals! hear that!
By Heavens! appeals! *Appeal*, vile slave? to whom?
The Monk. To that which—looking o'er your heads
and through
These walls, which soon shall be as dust—I see
Rise like an awful spirit from the earth.
To you, as yet, invisible. To me,
Present and filling all things. Strong as fate;
Dreadful as heavenly justice; more imperial
Than all the builders of the Babylons;
Invincible as death; and beautiful
As itself only.
President. Drag the traitor out!
What! Does he threaten us with ghosts?
Men rush in shouting. To arms!
To arms!
Others. The mob!
Others. Rebellion!
Others. Carbonari!
A Judge. Guard the priest!

Enter Soldier.

Soldier. Captain, twenty thousand men,
By my guess—rogues and peasants——
Captain. How far hence
Soldier. Three gunshots.
Captain. Armed?

Soldier. Ordnance, they say!

Captain. Who leads?

Soldier. A Woman.

A Judge. Man the gates!

Men (*rushing in*). The mob! the mob!

A Spectator (*to the Monk*). Be these thy ghosts then?

The Monk. Were the troubled waters
The angel? Yet how many at Bethesda
Saw no more than the trouble!

Spectator. Being heal'd,
What matter?

The Monk. Good friend, much. The heal'd will worship
The healer.

Men (*rushing in*). Haste, haste, haste.

More. My lords! a woman,
My lords! a woman like a prophetess,
Hair in the winds, and eyes on fire——

A Judge. We know.
Peace! Guards, remove the prisoner!

President. Eh—eh—what—
Remove—remove—yes, yes, off with him—eh?
You lag? You dogs! lend me a bayonet! There,
There! by the heels! Drag him out by the heels!

A Judge (*to the Captain*). Tell off two hundred. By the southern gate
Lead out your prisoner. Underneath the walls

Let him be shot. Face right about, and reach
The western heights.

Great shouts without. Down with the Austrians! Arms!

Blood! Charge! Death—death to tyrants! Victory! Freedom!

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

(OF ABOUT THE SAME DATE AS 'THE ROMAN').

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

A MUSING ON A VICTORY.

(1847.)

Down by the Sutlej shore,
Where sound the trumpet and the wild tum-tum,
At winter's eve did come
A gaunt old northern lion, at whose roar
The myriad howlers of thy wilds are dumb,
Blood-stained Ferozepore !

In the rich Indian night,
And dreaming of his mate beyond the sea,
Toil-worn but grand to sight,
He made his lair, in might,
Beneath thy dark palm-tree,
And thou didst rouse him to the unequal fight—
And woe for thee !

For some of that wild land
Had heard him in the desert where he lay;
And soon he snuffs upon their hurtling way,
The hunters—bandby band ;
And up he gat him from the eastern sand
And leaped upon his prey.

Alas for man! Alas for all thy dreams,
Thou great somnambulist, wherein, outlawed
From right and thought, thou workest out unawed
Thy grand fantastic fancies! Thro' the flood,
The pestilence, the whirlwind, the dread plain
Of thunders—thro' the earthquake and the storm,
The deluge and the snows, the whirling ice
Of the wild glacier, every ghastly form
Of earth's most vexed vicissitudes of pain,—
Thro' worlds of fire and seas of mingled bloods
Thou rushest, dreadful as a maniac god ;
And only finding that thou wert not sane
When some great sorrow thunders at thy brain
And wakes thee trembling by a precipice.

Alas for thee, thou grey-haired man that still
Art sleeping, and canst hold thy grandchild high
That he may see the gorgeous wrong go by
Which slew his father! And for thee, thou bright
Inheritress of summer-time and light,
Alas for thee, that thy young cheek is flush'd

With dreaming of the lion and the foe,
Tho' it had been yet paler than the snow
Upon the battle-hill, if once had gush'd,
But once before thee, even the feeblest flow
Of that life's blood that swept in floods below.
Alas! that even thy beauty cannot break
The vampyre spell of such a war-dream's woe,—
Alas! tho' waking might have been to know
Things which had made it sweeter not to wake.

Alas for man!—poor hunchback—all so proud
And yet so conscious; man that stalks divine
Because he feels so mortal, speaking loud
To drown the trembling whisper in his heart,
And wildly hurrying on from crowd to crowd,
In hope to shun the faithful shapes that start
Wherever lake doth sleep or streamlet shine
In silent solitudes. When once in youth
Fresh from the spheres, and too severely wise,
Truth drew the face he longed yet feared to view,
Stung with the instinct that confessed it true
He dashed the tablets from her sacred hand;
She drops her singing robes and leaves his land;
And Fiction, decent in the garb of Truth,
While lurking mischief lights her lambent eyes,
Seizes the fallen pencil, and with grave
Historic features paints the lies we crave.

So war became a welcome woe. The grass
Grows tear-bedewed upon a lonely grave,
And we plant sad flow'rs and sweet epitaphs,
And every grief of monumental stone,
Above a single woe; but let men sleep
In thousands, and we choose their hideous heap
For Joy to hold his godless orgies on.
Is it that some strange law's unknown behest
Makes gladness of the greatest woes we have
And leaves us but to sorrow for the less?
Even as in outward nature light's excess
Is blindness, and intensest motion rest;
Or is it not—oh conscious heart declare—
That the vast pride of our o'erwrought despair,
Seeing the infinite grief, and knowing yet
We have no tears to pay such deep distress,
Grown wild, repudiates the direful debt,
And in its very bankrupt madness laughs?—

Yet when this Victory's fame shall pass, as grand
And griefless as a rich man's funeral,
Thro' nations that look on with spell-bound eye,
While echoing plaudits ring from land to land,
Alas! will there be none among the good
And great and brave and free, to speak of all
The pale piled pestilence of flesh and blood,
The common cold corruption that doth lie
Festering beneath the pall?

Alas! when time has deified the thought
Of this day's desperate devilry, and men
(Who scorn to inherit virtue, but will ape
Their sires, and bless them, when they sin) shall shape
A graven image of the thought, and then
Fall down to worship it—will no one dare,
While nations kneel before the idol there,
To stand and tell them it is Juggernaut?
Alas for man! if this new crime shall yield
To truth no harvest for the sighs it cost;
If this crowned corpse, this pale ensceptred ghost
That stalks, Ferozepore, from thy red field
Robed as a king, shall all unchallenged pass
Down the proud scene of Time. Alas, alas!
If there are some to weep and some to pray,
And none to bow their humbled heads and say,
Low sighing,—There hath been a mortal strife;
And thirteen thousand murdered men lie there,
And day and night upon the tainted air
Blaspheme the Lord of Life.

ISABEL.

(1847.)

In the most early morn
I rise from a damp pillow, tempest-tost,
To seek the sun with silent gaze forlorn,
And mourn for thee, my lost
Isabel.

That early hour I meet
The daily vigil of my life to keep,
Because there are no other lights so sweet,
Or shades so long and deep,
Isabel.

And best I think of thee
Beside the duskest shade and brightest sun,
Whose mystic lot in life it was to be
Outshone, outwept by none,
Isabel.

Men said that thou wert fair :
There is no brightness in the heaven above,
There is no balm upon the summer air
Like thy warm love,
Isabel.

Men saw that thou wert bright :
There is no wildness in the winds that blow,
There is no darkness in the winter's night
Like thy dark woe,
Isabel.

And yet thy path did miss
Men's footsteps : in their haunts thou hadst no joy ;
The thoughts of other worlds were thine in this ;
In thy sweet piety, and in thy bliss
And grief, for life too coy,
Isabel.

And so my heart's despair
Looks for thee ere the firstling smoke hath curled ;
While the rapt earth is at her morning pray'r,
Ere yet she putteth on her workday air
And robes her for the world,
Isabel.

When the sun-burst is o'er,
My lonely way about the world I take,
Doing and saying much, and feeling more,
And all things for thy sake,
Isabel.

But never once I dare
To see thine image till the day be new,
And lip hath sullied not the unbreathed air,
And waking eyes are few,
Isabel.

Then that lost form appears
Which was a joy to few on earth but me :
In the young light I see thy guileless glee,
In the deep dews thy tears,
Isabel.

So with Promethean moan
In widowhood renewed I learn to grieve ;
Blest with one only thought—that I alone
Can fade : that thou thro' years shalt still shine on
In beauty, as in beauty art thou gone,
Thou morn that knew no eve,
Isabel.

In beauty art thou gone ;
As some bright meteor gleams across the night,
Gazed on by all, but understood by none,
And dying by its own excess of light,
Isabel.

TO A CATHEDRAL TOWER, ON THE EVENING OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF WATERLOO.

(FIRST PRINTED IN THE 'ATHENÆUM' OF AUGUST 3, 1850.)

And since thou art no older, 'tis to-day!
And I, entranced,—with the wide sense of gods
Confronting Time—receive the equal touch
Of Past and Present. Yet I am not moved
To frenzy; but, with how much calm befits
The insufficient passions of a soul
Expanding to celestial limits, take
Ampler vitality, and fill, serene,
The years that are and were. Unchanging Pile!
Our schoolboy fathers play in yonder streets,
Wherethro' their mothers, new from evening prayer,
Speak of the pleasant eve, and say Good Night.
Say on! to whom, oh never more shall night
Seem good; to whom for the last time hath eve
Been pleasant! Look up to the sunset skies
As a babe smiles into his murderer's face,
Nor see the Fate that flushes all the heaven,
Unconscious Mother! Hesper thro' the trees
Palpitates light; and thou, beholding peace,

Keepest thy vigil and art fond to think
His heart is beating for a world of bliss.
'Oh Sabbath Land!' Ah Mother, doth thine ear
Discern new silence? Dost thou dream what right
The earth may have to seem so still to thee?
Oh Sabbath Land! but on the Belgian plain
The bolt has fallen; and the storm draws off
In scattered thunders groaning round the hills
And tempest-drops of woe upon the field.
The king of men has turned his charger's head
Whose hoofs did shake the world, but clatter now
Unheeding sod. He turns, and in his track
The sorrows of the centuries to come
Cry on the air. He rides into the night,
Which as a dreadful spirit hails him in
With lightnings and with voices. Far behind,
In the War-marish, Victory and Glory
Fall by each other's hands, like friends of old,
Unconquered. And the genius of his race,
Pale, leaning on a broken eagle, dies.
High in the midst departing Freedom stands
On hills of slain; her wings unfurled, her hands
Toward heaven, her eyes turned, streaming, on the earth,
In act to rise. And all the present Fortunes,
Hopes, Oracles, and Omens of the world
Sitting alow, as mourners veiled and dumb,
Draw, with weird finger, in the battle-slime

The signs of Fate. Behold whom War salutes
Victor of victors. War, red-hot with toil,
Spokesman of Death. Death, pale with sated lust
And hoarse with greed. Behold! At his strong call
The bloody dust takes life, and obscene shapes
Clang on contending wings, wild wheeling round
His head exulting. How they hate the light
And rout the fevered sunset that looks back
Obtesting! How they scream up at the stars
And smite in rage the invisible air! How, like
A swoop of black thoughts thro' a stormy soul,
They rush about the Victor and snatch joys
For all the tyrants of the darkened globe.
Who shall withstand him? Him the evening star
Trembled to see. Our despots, from the first,
Bequeathed him each a feature, and he walks
The sum of all oppression and the sign.
O Earth! O Heaven! O Life! O Death! O Man!
Flesh of my flesh, my brother! Is there hope?
Soul, soul! behold the portent of the time.
High in the Heaven, the angels, much-attent,
With conscious faces and averted eyes
(As one who feels the wrong he will not see,)
Gaze upon God, and neither frown nor smile.
Grey Pile,
Who lookest with thy kindred hills upon
This quiet England, shadow-robed for sleep,
I also speak to thee as one whom kin

Emboldens. Demigod among the gods,
I charge thee by thy human nature speak!
Doth she sleep well? Thou who hast watched her face,
Tell me, for thou canst tell, doth the flesh creep?
Ah! and the soil of Albion stirred that day!
Ah! and these fields, at midnight, heaved with graves!

The vision ends. Collapsing to a point
In Time, I see thee, O red Waterloo,
A deadly wound now healed. From whose great scar
Upon the brow of MAN, the bloody husks
Have newly fallen. 'Twas a Felon's blow
On one who reeling, drunk with life, above
A precipice, fell by the timely steel;
Bled, and, deplete, was whole; saw with sane eyes
The gulph that yawned; and rises, praising God,
To bind the Assassin.

CRAZED.

(First Printed in the 'Athenæum' of November 23, 1850.)

'The Spring again hath started on the course
Wherein she seeketh Summer thro' the Earth.
I will arise and go upon my way.
It may be that the leaves of Autumn hid
His footsteps from me; it may be the snows.

'He is not dead. There was no funeral;
I wore no weeds. He must be in the Earth.
Oh where is he, that I may come to him
And he may charm the fever of my brain.

'Oh Spring, I hope that thou wilt be my friend.
Thro' the long weary Summer I toiled sore;
Having much sorrow of the envious woods
And groves that burgeoned round me where I came,
And when I would have seen him, shut him in.

'Also the Honeysuckle and wild bine
Being in love did hide him from my sight;
The Ash-tree bent above him; vicious weeds
Withheld me; Willows in the River-wind
Hissed at me, by the twilight, waving wands.

'Also, for I have told thee, oh dear Spring,
Thou knowest after I had sunk outworn
In the late summer gloom till Autumn came,
I looked up in the light of burning Woods
And entered on my wayfare when I saw
Gold on the ground and glory in the trees.

'And all my further journey thou dost know;
My toils and outcries as the lusty world
Grew thin to winter; and my ceaseless feet
In vales and on stark hills, till the first snow
Fell, and the large rain of the latter leaves.

'I hope that thou wilt be my friend, oh Spring,
And give me service of thy winds and streams.
It needs must be that he will hear thy voice,
For thou art much as I was when he woo'd
And won me long ago beside the Dee.

'If he should bend above you, oh ye streams,
And anywhere you look up into eyes
And think the star of love hath found her mate
And know, because of day, they are not stars;
Oh streams, they are the eyes of my beloved!
Oh murmur as I murmured once of old,
And he will stay beside you, oh ye streams,
And I shall clasp him when my day is come.

'Likewise I charge thee, west wind, zephyr wind,
If thou shalt hear a voice more sweet than thine

About a sunset rosetree deep in June,
Sweeter than thine, oh wind, when thou dost leap
Into the tree with passion, putting by
The maiden leaves that ruffle round their dame,
And singest and art silent,—having dropt
In pleasure on the bosom of the rose,—
Oh wind, it is the voice of my beloved ;
Wake, wake, and bear me to the voice, oh wind !

'Moreover, I do think that the spring birds
Will be my willing servants. Wheresoe'er
There mourns a hen-bird that hath lost her mate
Her will I tell my sorrow—weeping hers.

'And if it be a Lark whereto I speak,
She shall be ware of how my Love went up
Sole singing to the cloud ; and evermore
I hear his song, but him I cannot see.

'And if it be a female Nightingale
That pineth in the depth of silent woods,
I also will complain to her that night
Is still. And of the creeping of the winds
And of the sullen trees, and of the lone
Dumb Dark. And of the listening of the stars.
What have we done, what have we done, oh Night ?

'Therefore, oh Love, the summer trees shall be
My watch-towers. Wheresoe'er thou liest bound

I will be there. For ere the spring be past
I will have preached my dolour through the land,
And not a bird but shall have all my woe.
—And whatsoever hath my woe hath me.

'I charge you, oh ye flowers fresh from the dead,
Declare if ye have seen him. You pale flowers,
Why do you quake and hang the head like me?

'You pallid flowers, why do ye watch the dust
And tremble? Ah, you met him in your caves,
And shrank out shuddering on the wintry air.

'Snowdrops, you need not gaze upon the ground,
Fear not. He will not follow ye; for then
I should be happy who am doomed to woe.

'Only I bid ye say that he is there,
That I may know my grief is to be borne,
And all my Fate is but the common lot.'

She sat down on a bank of Primroses,
Swayed to and fro, as in a wind of Thought
That moaned about her, murmuring alow,
'The common lot, oh for the common lot.'

Thus spake she, and behold a gust of grief
Smote her. As when at night the dreaming wind
Starts up enraged, and shakes the Trees and sleeps.

'Oh early Rain, oh passion of strong crying,
Say, dost thou weep, oh Rain, for him or me?
Alas, thou also goest to the Earth
And enterest as one brought home by fear.

'Rude with much woe, with expectation wild,
So dashest thou the doors and art not seen.
Whose burial did they speak of in the skies?

'I would that there were any grass-green grave
Where I might stand and say, "Here lies my Love;"
And sigh, and look down to him, thro' the Earth.
And look up, thro' the clearing skies, and smile.'

Then the Day passed from bearing up the Heavens,
The sky descended on the Mountain tops
Unclouded; and the stars embower'd the Night.

Darkness did flood the Valley; flooding her.
And when the face of her great grief was hid,
Her callow heart, that like a nestling bird
Clamoured, sank down with plaintive pipe and slow.
Her cry was like a strange fowl in the dark:
'Alas Night,' said she; then like a faint ghost,
As tho' the owl did hoot upon the hills,
'Alas Night.' On the murky silence came
Her voice like a white sea-mew on the waste
Of the dark deep; a-sudden seen and lost

Upon the barren expanse of mid-seas
Black with the Thunder. 'Alas Night,' said she,
'Alas Night.' Then the stagnant season lay
From hill to hill. But when the waning Moon
Rose, she began with hasty step to run
The wintry mead; a wounded bird that seeks
To hide its head when all the trees are bare.
Silent,—for all her strength did bear her dread—
Silent, save when with bursting heart she cried,
Like one who wrestles in the dark with fiends,
'Alas Night.' With a dim wild voice of fear
As though she saw her sorrow by the moon.

The morning dawns . and earlier than the Lark
She murmureth, sadder than the Nightingale.

'I would I could believe me in that sleep
When on our bridal morn I thought him dead,
And dreamed and shrieked and woke upon his breast.

'Oh God, I cannot think that I am blind;
I think I see the beauty of the world.
Perchance but I am blind, and he is near.

'Even as I felt his arm before I woke,
And clinging to his bosom called on him,
And wept, and knew and knew not it was he.

'I do thank God I think that I am blind.
There is a darkness thick about my heart

And all I seem to see is as a dream;
My lids have closed, and have shut in the world.

'Oh Love, I pray thee take me by the hand;
I stretch my hand, oh Love, and quake with dread;
I thrust it, and I know not where. Ah me,
What shall not seize the dark hand of the blind?

'How know I, being blind, I am on Earth?
I am in Hell, in Hell, oh Love! I feel
There is a burning gulph before my feet!
I dare not stir—and at my back the fiends!
I wind my arms, my arms that demons scorch,
Round this poor breast, and all that thou shouldst save
From rapine. Husband, I cry out from Hell;
There is a gulph. They seize my flesh.' (She shrieked.)

'I will sink down here where I stand. All round
How know I but the burning pit doth yawn?
Here will I shrink and shrink to no more space
Than my feet cover.' (She wept.) 'So much up
My mortal touch makes honest. Oh my Life,
My Lord, my Husband! Fool that cryest in vain!
Ah Angel! What hast thou to do with Hell?

'And yet I do not ask thee, oh my Love,
To lead me to thee where thou art in Heaven.
Only I would that thou shouldst be my star,

And whatsoever Fate thy beams dispense
I am content. It shall be good to me.

'But tho' I may not see thee, oh my Love,
Yea, though mine eyes return and miss thee still,
And thou shouldst take another shape than thine,
Have pity on my lot, and lead me hence
Where I may think of thee. To the old fields
And wonted valleys where we once were blest.
Oh Love, all day I hear them, out of sight,
The far Home where the Past abideth yet
Beside the stream that prates of other days.

'My Punishment is more than I can bear.
My sorrow groweth big unto my time.
Oh Love, I would that I were mad. Oh Love,
I do not ask that thou shouldst change my Fate,
I will endure; but oh my Life, my Lord,
Being as thou art a thronèd saint in Heaven,
If thou wouldst touch me and enchant my sense,
And daze the anguish of my heart with dreams,
And change the stop of grief; and turn my soul
A little devious from the daily march
Of Reason, and the path of conscious woe
And all the truth of Life! Better, oh Love,
In fond delusion to be twice betrayed,
Than know so well and bitterly as I.
Let me be mad.' (She wept upon her knees.)

'I will arise and seek thee. This is Heaven.
I sat upon a cloud. It bore me in.
It is not so, you Heavens! I am not dead.
Alas! there have been pangs as strong as Death.
It would be sweet to know that I am dead.

'Even now I feel I am not of this world,
Which sayeth, day and night, "For all but thee,"
And poureth its abundance night and day
And will not feed the hunger in my heart.

'I tread upon a dream, myself a dream,
I cannot write my Being on the world,
The moss grows unrespective where I tread.

'I cannot lift mine eyes to the sunshine,
Night is not for my slumber. Not for me
Sink down the dark inexorable hours.

'I would not keep or change the weary day;
I have no pleasure in the needless night,
And toss and wail that other lids may sleep.

'I am a very Leper in the Earth.
Her functions cast me out; her golden wheels
That harmless roll about unconscious Babes
Do crush me. My place knoweth me no more.

'I think that I have died, oh you sweet Heavens.
I did not see the closing of the eyes.
Perchance there is one death for all of us
Whereof we cannot see the eyelids close.

'Dear Love, I do beseech thee answer me.
Dear Love, I think men's eyes behold me not.
The air is heavy on these lips that strain
To cry; I do not warm the thing I touch;
The Lake gives back no image unto me.

'I see the Heavens as one who wakes at noon
From a deep sleep. Now shall we meet again!
The Country of the blest is hid from me
Like Morn behind the Hills. The Angel smiles.
I breathe thy name. He hurleth me from Heaven.

'Now of a truth I know thou art on Earth.
Break, break the chains that hold me back from thee.
I see the race of mortal men pass by;
The great wind of their going waves my hair;
I stretch my hands, I lay my cheek to them,
In love; they stir the down upon my cheek;
I cannot touch them, and they know not me.

'Oh God! I ask to live the saddest life!
I care not for it if I may but live!
I would not be among the dead, oh God!
I am not dead! oh God, I will not die!'

So throbbed the trouble of this crazed heart.
So on the broken mirror of her mind
In bright disorder shone the shatter'd World.
So, out of tune, in sympathetic chords,
Her soul is musical to brooks and birds,
Winds, seasons, sunshine, flowers, and maundering trees.

Hear gently all the tale of her distress.
The heart that loved her loves not now yet lives.
What the eye sees and the ear hears—the hand
That wooing led her thro' the rosy paths
Of girlhood, and the lenten lanes of Love,
The brow whereon she trembled her first kiss,
The lips that had sole privilege of hers,
The eyes wherein she saw the Universe,
The bosom where she slept the sleep of joy,
The voice that made it sacred to her sleep
With lustral vows ; that which doth walk the World
Man among Men, is near her now. But He
Who wandered with her thro' the ways of Youth,
Who won the tender freedom of the lip,
Who took her to the bosom dedicate
And chaste with vows, who in the perfect whole
Of gracious Manhood was the god that stood
In her young Heaven, round whom the subject stars
Circled : in whose dear train, where'er he passed
Thronged charmèd powers ; at whose advancing feet
Upspringing happy seasons and sweet times

Made fond court carolling ; who but moved to stir
All things submissive, which did magnify
And wane as ever with his changing will
She changed the centre of her infinite ; He
In whom she worshipped Truth, and did obey
Goodness ; in whose sufficient love she felt,
Fond Dreamer ! the eternal smile of all
Angels and men ; round whom, upon his neck,
Her thoughts did hang; whom lacking they fell down
Distract to the earth ; He whom she *loved*, and who
Loved her of old,—in the long days before
Chaos, the empyrean days !—(Poor heart,
She phrased it so) is no more : and O God !
Thorough all Time, and that transfigured Time
We call Eternity, will be no more.

THE SNOWDROP IN THE SNOW.

(First printed in the Athenæum of March 1st, 1851.)

O full of Faith! The Earth is rock,—the Heaven
The dome of a great palace all of ice,
Russ-built. Dull light distils through frozen skies
Thickened and gross. Cold Fancy droops her wing,
And cannot range. In winding-sheets of snow
Lies every thought of any pleasant thing.
I have forgotten the green earth; my soul
Deflowered, and lost to every summer hope,
Sad sitteth on an iceberg at the Pole;
My heart assumes the landscape of mine eyes
Moveless and white, chill blanched with hoarest rime
The Sun himself is heavy and lacks cheer
Or on the eastern hill or western slope;
The world without seems far and long ago;
To silent woods stark famished winds have driven
The last lean robin—gibbering winds of fear!
Thou only darest to believe in spring,
Thou only smilest, Lady of the Time!

Even as the stars come up out of the sea
Thou risest from the Earth. How is it down
In the dark depths? Should I delve there, O Flower,
For beauty? Shall I find the Summer there
Met manifold, as in an ark of peace?
And Thou, a lone white Dove, art thou sent forth
Upon the winter deluge? It shall cease,
But not for thee—pierced by the ruthless North
And spent with the Evangel. In what hour
The flood abates thou wilt have closed thy wings
For ever. When the happy living things
Of the old world come forth upon the new
I know my heart shall miss thee; and the dew
Of summer twilights shall shed tears for me
—Tears liker thee, ah, purest! than mine own—
Upon thy vestal grave, O vainly fair!

Thou should'st have noble destiny, who, like
A Prophet, art shut out from kind and kin:
Who on the winter silence comest in
A still small voice. Pale Hermit of the Year,
Flower of the Wilderness! oh, not for thee
The jocund playmates of the maiden spring.
For when she danceth forth with cymballed feet,
Waking a-sudden with great welcoming,
Each calling each, they burst from hill to dell
In answering music. But thou art a bell,
A passing bell, snow-muffled, dim and sweet.

As is the Poet to his fellow-men,
So mid thy drifting snows, O Snowdrop, Thou.
Gifted, in sooth, beyond them, but no less
A snowdrop. And thou shalt complete his lot
And bloom as fair as now when they are not.
Thou art the wonder of the seasons, O
First-born of Beauty. As the Angel near
Gazed on that first of living things which, when
The blast that ruled since Chaos o'er the sere
Leaves of primeval Palms did sweep the plain,
Clung to the new-made sod and would not drive,
So gaze I upon thee amid the reign
Of Winter. And because thou livest, I live.
And art thou happy in thy loneliness?
Oh couldst thou hear the shouting of the floods,
Oh couldst thou know the stir among the trees
When—as the herald-voice of breeze on breeze
Proclaims the marriage pageant of the Spring
Advancing from the South—each hurries on
His wedding-garment, and the love-chimes ring
Thro' nuptial valleys! No, serene and lone,
I will not flush thy cheek with joys like these.
Songs for the rosy morning; at grey prime
To hang the head and pray. Thou doest well.
I will not tell thee of the bridal train.
No; let thy Moonlight die before their day
A Nun among the Maidens, thou and they.
Each hath some fond sweet office that doth strike

One of our trembling heartstrings musical.
Is not the hawthorn for the Queen of May?
And cuckoo-flowers for whom the cuckoo's voice
Hails, like an answering sister, to the woods?
Is not the maiden blushing in the rose?
Shall not the babe and buttercup rejoice,
Twins in one meadow! Are not violets all
By name or nature for the breast of Dames?
For them the primrose, pale as star of prime,
For them the wind-flower, trembling to a sigh,
For them the dew stands in the eyes of day
That blink in April on the daisied lea?
Like them they flourish and like them they fade,
And live beloved and loving. But for thee—
For such a bevy how art thou arrayed,
Flower of the Tempests? What hast thou with them?
Thou shalt be pearl unto a diadem
Which the Heavens jewel. *They* shall deck the brows
Of joy and wither there. But *thou* shalt be
A Martyr's garland. Thou who, undismayed,
To thy spring dreams art true amid the snows
As he to better dreams amid the flames.

THE HARPS OF HEAVEN.

On a solemn day
I clomb the shining bulwark of the skies:
Not by the beaten way,
But climbing by a prayer,
That like a golden thread hung by the giddy stair
Fleck'd on the immemorial blue,
By the strong step-stroke of the brave and few,
Who, stirr'd by echoes of far harmonies,
Must either lay them down and die of love,
Or dare
Those empyrean walls that mock their starward eyes.
But midway in the dread emprize
The faint and fainter footsteps cease;
And, all my footing gone,
Like one who gathers samphire, I hold on,
And in the swaying air look up and down:
And up and down through answering vasts descry
Nor Earth nor Heaven;
Above,
The sheer eternal precipice; below,

The sheer eternal precipice.
Then when I,
Gigantic with my desperate agony,
Felt even
The knotted grasp of bodily despair
Relaxing to let go,
A mighty music, like a wind of light,
Blew from the imminent height,
And caught me in its splendour; and, as flame
That flickers and again aspires,
Rose in a moment thither whence it came;
And I, that thought me lost,
Pass'd to the top of all my dear desires,
And stood among the everlasting host.
Then turn'd I to a seraph whose swift hands,
That lived angelic passion, struck his soul
Upon a harp—a seraph fair and strong,
And faultless for his harp and for his throne,
And yet, among
The Strength and Beauty of the heavenly bands,
No more to be remember'd than some one
Poor warrior, when a king of many kings
Stamps on the fields, and rears his glittering crop
Of standing steel, and the vex'd spirit wings
Above the human harvest, and in vain
Begins from morn till eve to sum the embattled plain;
Or when,
After a day of peace, sudden and late

The beacon flashes and the war-drums roll,
And through the torches of the city gate,
All the long winter night a martial race
Streams to the nation's gathering-place,
And, like as water-drop to water-drop,
Pour on in changeless flood the innumerable men.
I turn'd, and as from footing in mid-seas
Looking o'er lessening waves thou may'st behold
The round horizon of unshadow'd gold,
I, standing on an amethyst, look'd round
The moving Heaven of Harpers throned and crown'd,
And said, 'Was it from these
I heard the great sound?' And he said, 'What sound?'
Then I grown bolder, seeing I had thriven
To win reply—'This that I hear from thee,
This that everywhere I hear,
Rolling a sea of choristry
Up and down the jewel of Heaven;
A sea which from thy seat of light,
That seems more loud and bright
Because more near,
To the white twinkle of yon furthest portal,
Swells up those circling shores of chrysolite,
And, like an odorous luminous mist, doth leap the eternal walls,
And falls
In wreaths of melody
Adown the azure mountain of the sky;

And round its lower slopes bedew'd
Breathes lost beatitude;
And far away,
Low, low, below the last of all its lucent scarps,
Sprinkles bewildering drops of immortality.
O angel fair, thou know'st what I would say—
This sound of harpers that I hear,
This sound of harpers harping on their harps.'
Then he bent his head
And shed a tear
And said,
'I perceive thou art a mortal.'
Then I to him—'Not only, O thou bright
Seraphic Pity! to a mortal ear
These sacred sounds are dear,
Or why withholdest not thy ceaseless hand?
And why,
Far as my dazzled eye
Can pierce the lustre of the radiant land,
See I the rapt celestial auditory,
Each, while he blessed hears, gives back his bliss
With never-tiring touch from golden harps like this?
Then he to me—'Oh, wherefore hast thou trod
Beyond the limit of thine earthly lot?
These that we bear
Within our hands are instruments of glory,
Wherewith, day without night,
We make the glory of immortal light

In the eyes of God.
As for the sound, we hear it not;
Yet, speaking to thee, child of ignorance,
I do remember that I loved it once,
In the sweet lower air.'
Yet he spake once more,—
'But thou return to the remember'd shore;
Why shouldst thou leave thy nation,
Thy city, and the house of all most dear?
Do we not all dwell in eternity?
For we have been as thou, and thou
Shalt be as we.'
And he lean'd and kissèd me,
Saying, 'But now
Rejoice, O child, in other joys than mine
Hear the dear music of thy mortal ear
While yet it is the time with thee,
Nor make haste to thine exaltation,
Though our state be better than thine.'

SONNETS ON THE WAR.

(THESE SONNETS WERE FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1855.)

SONNETS ON THE WAR.

(THE CRIMEAN STRUGGLE.)

L'AVENIR.

I SAW the human millions as the sand
Unruffled on the starlit wilderness.
The day was near, and every star grew less
In universal dawn. Then woke a band
Of wheeling winds, and made a mighty stress
Of morning weather; and still wilder went
O'er shifting plains, till, in their last excess,
A whirlwind whirled across the whirling land.
Heaven blackened over it; a voice of woes
Foreran it; the great noise of clanging foes
Hurtled behind; beneath the earth was rent,
And howling Death, like an uncavern'd beast,
Leaped from his lair. Meanwhile morn oped the East,
And thro' the dusty tumult God arose.

THE ARMY SURGEON.

OVER that breathing waste of friends and foes,
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour,—
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,—
He labours thro' the red and groaning day.
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay
Moved as a moving field of mangled worms.
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray
Above them, but when the bare branch performs
No sweet parental office, sink away
With hopeless chirp of woe, so as he goes
Around his feet in clamorous agony
They rise and fall; and all the seething plain
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-coloured pain.

THE WOUNDED.

'THOU canst not wish to live,' the surgeon said.
He clutched him, as a soul thrust forth from bliss
Clings to the ledge of Heaven! 'Would'st thou keep this
Poor branchless trunk?' 'But she would lean my head
Upon her breast; oh, let me live!' 'Be wise.'
'I could be very happy; both these eyes
Are left me; I should see her; she would kiss
My forehead: only let me live.'—He dies
Even in the passionate prayer. 'Good Doctor, say
If thou canst give more than another day
Of life?' 'I think there may be hope.' 'Pass on.
I will not buy it with some widow's son!'
'Help,' 'help,' 'help,' 'help!' 'God curse thee!'
'Doctor, stay,
Yon Frenchman went down earlier in the day.'

THE WOUNDED.

'SEE to my brother, Doctor; I have lain
All day against his heart; it is warm there;
This stiffness is a trance; he lives! I swear,—
I swear he lives!' 'Good Doctor, teli my ain
Auld Mother'—but his pale lips moved in vain.
'Doctor, when you were little Master John,
I left the old place; you will see it again.
Tell my poor Father,—turn down the wood-lane
Beyond the home-field—cross the stepping stone
To the white cottage, with the garden gate—
O God!'—he died. 'Doctor, when I am gone
Send this to England.' 'Doctor, look upon
A countryman!' 'Devant mon Chef? Ma foi!'
'Oui, il est blessé beaucoup plus que moi.'

VOX POPULI.

WHAT if the Turk be foul or fair? Is't known
That the sublime Samaritan of old
Withheld his hand till the bruised wretch had told
His creed? Your neighbour's roof is but a shed,
Yet if he burns shall not the flame enfold
Your palace? Saving his, you save your own.
Oh ye who fall that Liberty may stand,
The light of coming ages shines before
Upon your graves! Oh ye immortal band,
Whether ye wrestled with this Satan o'er
A dead dog, or the very living head
Of Freedom, every precious drop ye bled
Is holy. 'Tis not for his broken door
That the stern goodman shoots the burglar dead.

CZAR NICHOLAS.

We could not turn from that colossal foe,
The morning shadow of whose hideous head
Darkened the furthest West, and who did throw
His evening shade on Ind. The polar bow
Behind him flamed and paled, and through the red
Uncertain dark his vasty shape did grow
Upon the sleepless nations. Lay him low!
Aye, low as for our priceless English dead
We lie and groan to-day in England! Oh,
My God! I think Thou hast not finished
This Thy fair world, where, triumph Ill or Good,
We still must weep; where or to lose or gain
Is woe; where Pain is medicined by Pain,
And Blood can only be washed out by Blood.

CAVALRY CHARGE AT BALACLAVA.

TRAVELLER on foreign ground, whoe'er thou art,
Tell the great tidings ! They went down that day
A Legion, and came back from victory
Two hundred men and Glory ! On the mart
Is this '*to lose?*' Yet, Stranger, thou shalt say
These were our common Britons. 'Tis our way
In England. Aye, ye heavens ! I saw them part
The Death-Sea as an English dog leaps o'er
The rocks into the ocean. He goes in
Thick as a lion, and he comes out thin
As a starved wolf; but lo ! he brings to shore
A life above his own, which when his heart
Bursts with that final effort, from the stones
Springs up and builds a temple o'er his bones.

HOME, IN WAR-TIME.

SHE turned the fair page with her fairer hand—
More fair and frail than it was wont to be—
O'er each remembered thing he loved to see
She lingered, and as with a fairy's wand
Enchanted it to order. Oft she fanned
New motes into the sun ; and as a bee
Sings thro' a brake of bells, so murmured she,
And so her patient love did understand
The reliquary room. Upon the sill
She fed his favourite bird. 'Ah, Robin, sing !
He loves thee.' Then she touches a sweet string
Of soft recall, and towards the Eastern hill
Smiles all her soul—for him who cannot hear
The raven croaking at his carrion ear.

WARNING.

VIRTUE is Virtue, writ in ink or blood.
And Duty, Honour, Valour, are the same
Whether they cheer the thundering steps of Fame
Up echoing hills of Alma, or, more blest,
Walk with her in that band where she is least
Thro' smiling plains and cities doing good.
Vet, oh to sing them in their happier day !
Yon glebe is not the hind whose manhood mends
Its rudeness, yet it gains but while he spends,
And mulcts him rude. Even that sinless Lord
Whose feet wan Mary washed, went not His way
Uncoloured by the Galilean field ;
And Honour, Duty, Valour, seldom wield
With stainless hand the immedicable sword.

AMÈRICA.

MEN say, Columbia, we shall hear thy guns.
But in what tongue shall be thy battle-cry?
Not that our sires did love in years gone by,
When all the Pilgrim Fathers were little sons
In merrie homes of Englaunde? Back, and see
Thy satchelled ancestor! Behold, he runs
To mine, and, clasped, they tread the equal lea
To the same village-school, where side by side
They spell 'our Father.' Hard by, the twin-pride
Of that grey hall whose ancient oriel gleams
Thro' yon baronial pines, with looks of light
Our sister-mothers sit beneath one tree.
Meanwhile our Shakspeare wanders past and dreams
His Helena and Hermia. Shall we fight?

AMERICA.

Nor force nor fraud shall sunder us! Oh ye
Who north or south, on east or western land,
Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
For God; Oh ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand
Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,
Far, yet unsevered,—children brave and free
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
Lords of an Empire wide as Shakspeare's soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spencer's dream.

A STATESMAN.

CAPTAIN be he, my England, who doth know
Not careful coasts, with inland welcomes warm ;
But who, with heart infallible, can go
Straight to the gulf-streams of the World, where blow
The inevitable Winds. Let cockles swarm
The sounded shores. He helms Thee, England ! who,
Faced by the very Spirit of the Storm,
Full at the phantom drives his dauntless prow !
And tho' the Vision rend in racks of blood,
And drip in thunder from his reeling spars,
The compass in his hand, beholds the flood
Beneath, o'er-head the everlasting stars
Dim thro' the gory ghost ; and calm in these,
Thro' that tremendous dream sails on to happier seas.

POLAND. ITALY. HUNGARY.

In the great Darkness of the Passion, graves
Were oped, and many Saints which slept arose.
So in this latter Darkness, which doth close
Upon our noon. That Peace Divine which saves
And blesses, and from the celestial waves
Of whose now-parted garment our worst woes
Did touch a healing virtue, by our foes
Is crucified. The inextricable slaves
Have slain what should have set them free. Behold
The vail is rent! Earth yawns; the rocks are hurled
In twain; and Kingdoms long since low and cold,
Each with his dead forgotten brow enfurled
In that proud flag he fell upon of old,
Come forth into the City of the World.

JERUSALEM.

If God so raise the Dead, shall He pass by
The Captive and the immemorable chain?
Judæa capta!—taken but not slain—
And cursèd not to die—ah, not to die?
Then come out of thine ages, thou art free!
Live but one Greek in old Thermopylæ,
And Greece is saved! Dark stands the Northern Fate
At Europe's open door; upon her nod
To pass that breach a hundred nations wait.
What! shall we meet her with the bayonet?
As the West sets the Sun 'twixt sea and sky
In that Great Gate, Immortal! let us set
Thy doom; quit Destiny with Destiny,
Meet Fate by Fate, and fill the gap with God.

AUSTRIAN ALLIANCE.

DOTH this hand live? Trust not a royal coat,
My country! Smite that cheek; there is no stain
But of the clay! no flush of shame or pain.
This is the smell o' the grave. Lift the gold crown
And see that brow. Lo! how the dews drip down
The empty house! The worm is on the walls,
And the half-shuttered lights are dull and dead
With dusty desecration. The soul fled
On a spring-day within thy palace-halls,
Hapsburg! and all the days of all the springs
Of all the ages bring it not again!
Vampyre! we wrench thee from the breathing throat
Of living Man, and he leaps up and flings
Thy rotten carcase at the heads of Kings.

CHILDLESS.

THE SON thou sentest forth is now a Thought—
A Dream. To all but thee he is as nought
As if he had gone back into the same
Bosom that bare him. Oh, thou grey pale Dame,
With eyes so wan and wide, what! knowest thou where
Thy Dream is such a thing as doth up-bear
The earth out of its wormy place? I' the air
Dost see the very fashion of the stone
That hath his face for clay? Deep, deep, hast found
The texture of that single weight of ground
Which to each mole and mark that thou hast known
Is special burden? Nay, her face is mild
And sweet. In Heaven the evening star is fair,
And there the mother looketh for her child.

THE COMMON GRAVE.

LAST night beneath the foreign stars I stood
And saw the thoughts of those at home go by
To the great grave upon the hill of blood.
Upon the darkness they went visibly,
Each in the vesture of its own distress.
Among them there came One, frail as a sigh,
And like a creature of the wilderness
Dug with her bleeding hands. She neither cried
Nor wept; nor did she see the many stark
And dead that lay unburied at her side.
All night she toiled, and at that time of dawn,
When Day and Night do change their More and Less,
And Day is More, I saw the melting Dark
Stir to the last, and knew she laboured on.

ESSE ET POSSE.

THE groan of fallen Hosts; a torrid glare
Of cities; battle-cries of Right and Wrong
Where armies shout to rocking fleets that roar
On thundering oceans to the thundering shore,
And high o'er all—long, long prolonged, along
The moaning caverns of the plaining air,—
The cry of conscious Fate. The firmament
Waves from above me like a tattered flag;
And as a soldier in his lowly tent
Looks up when a shot strikes the helpless rag
From o'er him, and beholds the canopy
Of Heaven, so, sudden to my startled eye,
The Heavens that shall be! The dream fades. I stand
Among the mourners of a mourning land.

GOOD-NIGHT IN WAR-TIME.

(To Alexander Smith.)

The stars we saw arise are high above,
And yet our Evensong seems sung too soon.
Good-Night! I lay my hand—with such a love
As thou wert brother of my blood—upon
Thy shoulder, and methinks beneath the moon
Those sisters, Anglia and Caledon,
Lean towards each other. Aye, for Man is one;
We are a host ruled by one trumpet-call,
Where each, armed in his sort, makes as he may
The general motion. The well-tuned array
We see; yet to what victory in what wars
We see not; but like the revolving stars
Move on ourselves. The total march of all
Or men or stars God knows. Lord, lead us on!

ENGLAND IN TIME OF WAR.

(THESE LYRICS WERE FIRST PRINTED IN 1856.)

ENGLAND IN TIME OF WAR.

DESOLATE.

FROM the sad eaves the drip-drop of the rain!
The water washing at the latchel door;
A slow step plashing by upon the moor;
A single bleat far from the famished fold;
The clicking of an embered hearth and cold;
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

'So as it is with thee
Is it with me,
So as it is and it used not to be,
With thee used not to be,
Nor me.'
So singeth Robin on the willow tree,
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

Here in this breast all day
The fire is dim and low,
Within I care not to stay,
Without I care not to go.

A sadness ever sings
Of unforgotten things,
And the bird of love is patting at the pane ;
But the wintry water deepens at the door,
And a step is plashing by upon the moor
Into the dark upon the darkening moor,
And alas, alas, the drip-drop of the rain !

THE MARKET-WIFE'S SONG.[1]

THE butter an' the cheese weel stowit they be,
I sit on the hen-coop the eggs on my knee,
The lang kail jigs as we jog owre the rigs,
The gray mare's tail it wags wi' the kail,
The warm simmer sky is blue aboon a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I sit on the coop, I look straight before,
But my heart it is awa' the braid ocean owre,
I see the bluidy fiel' where my ain bonny chiel',
My wee bairn o' a', gaed to fight or to fa',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

[1] In several of the Scottish songs of this volume, the author wishes, notwithstanding whatever *couleur locale* they may possess, to be understood as speaking rather for a class than a locality. As most of the English provincial dialects are poetically objectionable, and are modifications of tongues which exist more purely in the 'Lallans' of Scotland, it seemed to him that when expressing the general peasant life of the empire he might employ the central truth of that noble Doric which is at once rustic and dignified, heroic and vernacular.

I see the gran' toun o' the big forrin' loun,
I hear the cannon soun', I see the reek aboon;
It may be lang John lettin' aff his gun,
It may be the mist—your mither disna wist—
It may be the kirk, it may be the ha',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

An' I ken the Black Sea, ayont the rock o' dool,
Like a muckle blot o' ink in a buik fra' the schule,
An' Jock! it gars me min' o' your buikies lang syne,
An' mindin' o' it a' the tears begin to fa',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the old wheels twa.

Then a bull roars fra' the scaur, ilka rock 's a bull agen,
An' I hear the trump o' war, an' the carse is fu' o' men,
Up an' doun the morn I ken the bugle horn,
Ilka birdie sma' is a fleein' cannon ba',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Guid Heavens! the Russian host! We maun e'en gie up for lost!
Gin ye gain the battle hae ye countit a' the cost?
Ye may win a gran' name, but wad wee Jock come hame?
Dinna fecht, dinna fecht! there's room for us a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

In vain, in vain, in vain! They are marchin' near and far!
Wi' swords an' wi' slings an' wi' instruments o' war!

Oh, day sae dark an' sair! ilka man seven feet an' mair!
I bow my head an' say, 'Gin the Lord wad smite them a'!'
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then forth fra' their ban' there steps an armed man,
His tairge at his breast an' his claymore in his han',
His gowd pow glitters fine an' his shadow fa's behin',
I think o' great Goliath as he stan's before them a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

To meet the Philistine leaps a laddie fra' our line,
Oh, my heart! oh, my heart! 'tis that wee lad o' mine!
I start to my legs—an' doun fa' the eggs—
The cocks an' hens a' they cackle an' they ca',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad—oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad,
Never till I saw thee that moment was I glad!
Aye sooner sud thou dee before thy mither's ee'
Than a man o' the clan sud hae stept out but thee!
An' sae I cry to God—while the hens cackle a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

THE LITTLE GIRL'S SONG.

Do not mind my crying, Papa, I am not crying for pain.
Do not mind my shaking, Papa, I am not shaking with fear;
Tho' the wild wild wind is hideous to hear,
And I see the snow and the rain.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Somebody else that you love, Papa,
Somebody else that you dearly love
Is weary, like me, because you're away.
Sometimes I see her lips tremble and move,
And I seem to know what they're going to say;
And every day, and all the long day,
I long to cry, 'Oh Mamma, Mamma,
When will Papa come back again?'
But before I can say it I see the pain
Creeping up on her white white cheek,
As the sweet sad sunshine creeps up the white wall,
And then I am sorry, and fear to speak;
And slowly the pain goes out of her cheek,

As the sad sweet sunshine goes from the wall.
Oh, I wish I were grown up wise and tall,
That I might throw my arms round her neck
And say, 'Dear Mamma, oh, what is it all
That I see and see and do not see
In your white white face all the livelong day?'
But she hides her grief from a child like me.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Where were you going, Papa, Papa?
All this long while have you been on the sea?
When she looks as if she saw far away,
Is she thinking of you, and what does she see?
Are the white sails blowing,
And the blue men rowing,
And are you standing on the high deck
Where we saw you stand till the ship grew gray,
And we watched and watched till the ship was a speck,
And the dark came first to you, far away?
I wish I could see what she can see,
But she hides her grief from a child like me.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Don't you remember, Papa, Papa,
How we used to sit by the fire, all three,
And she told me tales while I sat on her knee,

And heard the winter winds roar down the street,
And knock like men at the window pane,
And the louder they roared, oh, it seemed more sweet
To be warm and warm as we used to be,
Sitting at night by the fire, all three?
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Papa, I like to sit by the fire;
Why does she sit far away in the cold?
If I had but somebody wise and old,
That every day I might cry and say,
'Is she changed, do you think, or do I forget?
Was she always as white as she is to-day?
Did she never carry her head up higher?'
Papa, Papa, if I could but know!
Do you think her voice was always so low?
Did I always see what I seem to see
When I wake up at night and her pillow is wet?
You used to say her hair it was gold —
It looks like silver to me.
But still she tells the same tale that she told,
She sings the same songs when I sit on her knee,
And the house goes on as it went long ago,
When we lived together, all three.
Sometimes my heart seems to sink, Papa,
And I feel as if I could be happy no more.
Is she changed, do you think, Papa,

Or did I dream she was brighter before?
She makes me remember my snowdrop, Papa,
That I forgot in thinking of you,
The sweetest snowdrop that ever I knew!
But I put it out of the sun and the rain:
It was green and white when I put it away,
It had one sweet bell and green leaves four;
It was green and white when I found it that day,
It had one pale bell and green leaves four,
But I was not glad of it any more.
Was it changed, do you think, Papa,
Or did I dream it was brighter before?

Do not mind my crying, Papa,
I am not crying for pain.
Do not mind my shaking, Papa,
I am not shaking for fear;
Tho' the wild wild wind is hideous to hear,
And I see the snow and the rain.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

'HE IS SAFE.'

'And it shall come to pass at eventide
There shall be light.' Lord, it hath come to pass.
As one day to the world so now to me
Thine advent. My dark eve is white as noon;
My year so sour and green is gold and red;
Mine eyes have seen Thy Goodness. All is done.

All things bespeak an end. I am come near
The crown o' this steep earth. My feet still stand
Cold in the western shadow, but my brow
Lives in the living light. The toil is o'er,
Surely 'He giveth His beloved Rest.'

I feel two worlds: one ends and one begins.
Methinks I dwell in both; being much here,
But more hereafter: even as when the nurse
Doth give the babe into the mother's arms,
And she who hath not quite resigned, and she
Who hath not all received, support in twain
The single burden; ne'ertheless the babe

Already tastes its mother. Lord, I come.
Thy signs are in me. 'He shall wipe away
All tears:' Thou see'st my tears are wiped away.
'There shall be no more pain:' Lord, it is done,
Here there is no more pain. 'The sun no more
Shall be their light by day:' even so, Lord,
I need no light of sun or moon! My heart
Is as a lamp of jasper, crystal-clear,
Dark when Thy light is out, but lit with Thee
The sun may be a suckling at this breast,
And milk a nobler glory. Lord, I know
Mine hour. This painful world, that was of thorns,
Is roses. Like a fragrance thro' my soul
I breathe a balm of slumber. Let me sleep.
Bring me my easy pillows, Margery.
I am asleep; this oak is soft: all things
Are rest: I sink as into bliss. O Lord,
Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.

THE SODGER'S LASSIE.

A' THE toun is to the doun
Puin' o' the blaeberrie.
Ab's gane, Rab's gane,
Aggie's gane, Maggie's gane,
A' the toun is to the doun,
An's left the house to wae and me.

Heigho the blaeberrie !
Wha'll hae a blaeberrie ?
Ah, to min' o' auld lang syne,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie !

Sodger Tam, he cam an' cam,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie ;
Still I went, an' still I bent,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie.

Berries high, an' berries low,
Heigho the blaeberrie !
Tam maun come where berries grow,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie.

Heigho the blaeberrie !
Wha'll hae a blaeberrie ?
Ah, to min' o' auld lang syne,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie !

Never ance I looked at Tam,
Heigho the blaeberrie !
Weel I kent him when he cam,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie.

Baith our faces to the groun',
Puin' o' the blaeberrie,
Tam cam near without a soun',
Heigho the blaeberrie !

Wow ! but we were near, I ween,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie !
A' the air was warm between,
Heigho the blaeberrie !

Could a lassie think o' ill,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie ?
Berries e'en grow where they will,
Heigho the blaeberrie !

Berries here, an' berries there,
Heigho the blaeberrie !
I was kissed or I was ware,
Puin' o' the blaeberrie.

Wha wad fash wi' ane anither
Puin' o' the blaeberrie?
Berries whiles will grow thegither,
Heigho the blaeberrie!

I was kissed or I could speer,
Heigho the blaeberrie!
Hech! that folk sud come sae near,
A' to pu' a blaeberrie!

While I grat and chid forbye,
Heigho the blaeberrie!
Doun we sat—I ken na why—
A' amang the blaeberrie.

Heigho the blaeberrie!
Wha 'll hae a blaeberrie?
Oh, to min' o' auld lang syne,
A' amang the blaeberrie!

Sidelong Tam he cam an' cam
A' amang the blaeberrie.
Wha could tell he meant na fair?
Weel I ken I chid him sair,
But that day we gaed na mair
Puin' o' the blaeberrie!

Heigho the blaeberrie!
Wha 'll hae a blaeberrie?
Oh, to min' o' auld lang syne,
Doun amang the blaeberrie!

LADY CONSTANCE.

My Love, my Lord,
I think the toil of glorious day is done.
I see thee leaning on thy jewelled sword,
And a light-hearted child of France
Is dancing to thee in the sun,
And thus he carols in his dance.

'Oh, a gallant sans peur
Is the merry chasseur,
With his fanfaron horn and his rifle ping-pang!
And his grand havresack
Of gold on his back,
His pistol cric-crac!
And his sword cling-clang!

'Oh, to see him blithe and gay
From some hot and bloody day,
Come to dance the night away till the bugle blows "au rang,"
With a wheel and a whirl
And a wheeling waltzing girl,

And his bow, "place aux dames!" and his oath "feu et
sang!'
And his hop and his fling
Till his gold and silver ring
To the clatter and the clash of his sword cling-clang!

'But hark,
Thro' the dark,
Up goes the well-known shout!
The drums beat the turn out!
Cut short your courting, Monsieur l'Amant!
Saddle! mount! march! trot!
Down comes the storm of shot,
The foe is at the charge! En avant!

'His jolly havresack
Of gold is on his back,
Hear his pistol cric-crac! hear his rifle ping-pang!

'Vive l' Empereur!
And where's the Chasseur?

'He's in
Among the din
Steel to steel cling-clang!'

And thou within the doorway of thy tent
Leanest at ease with careless brow unbent,

Watching the dancer in as pleased a dream
As if he were a gnat i' the evening gleam,
And thou and I were sitting side by side
Within the happy bower
Where oft at this same hour
We watched them the sweet year I was a bride.

My Love, my Lord,
Leaning so grandly on thy jewelled sword,
Is there no thought of home to whisper thee,
None can relieve the weary guard I keep,
None wave the flag of breathing truce for me,
Nor sound the hours to slumber or to weep?
Once in a moon the bugle breaks thy rest,
I count my days by trumpets and alarms:
Thou liest down in thy warcloak and art blest,
While I, who cannot sleep but in thine arms,
Wage night and day fresh fields unknown to fame,
Arm, marshal, march, charge, fight, fall, faint, and die,
Know all a soldier can endure but shame,
And every chance of warfare but to fly.
I do not murmur at my destiny:
It can but go with love, with whom it came,
And love is like the sun—his light is sweet,
And sweet his shadow—welcome both to me!
Better for ever to endure that hurt
Which thou canst taste but once than once to lie
At ease when thou hast anguish. Better I

Be often sad when thou art gay than gay
One moment of thy sorrow. Tho' I pray
Too oft I shall win nothing of the sky
But my unfilled desire and thy desert
Can take it and still lack. Oh, might I stay
At the shut gates of heaven! that so I meet
Each issuing fate, and cling about his feet
And melt the dreadful purpose of his eye,
And not one power pass unimpleaded by
Whose bolt might be for thee! Aye, love is sweet
In shine or shade! But love hath jealousy,
That knowing but so little thinks so much!
And I am jealous of thee even with such
A fatal knowledge. For I wot too well
In the set season that I cannot tell
Death will be near thee. This thought doth deflour
All innocence from time. I dare not say
'Not now,' but for the instant cull the hour,
And for the hour reap all the doubtful day,
And for the day the year: and so, forlorn,
From morn till night, from startled night till morn,
Like a blind slave I bear thine heavy ill
Till thy time comes to take it: come when 't will
The broken slave will bend beneath it still.

HOW'S MY BOY?

'Ho, Sailor of the sea!
How's my boy—my boy?'
'What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sailed he?'

'My boy John—
He that went to sea—
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy's my boy to me.

'You come back from sea,
And not know my John?
I might as well have asked some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

'How's my boy—my boy?
And unless you let me know
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,

Brass buttons or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the "Jolly Briton"'-
'Speak low, woman, speak low!'
'And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?'
'That good ship went down.'

'How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor,
I was never aboard her?
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how's my John?'
'Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her.'
'How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother—
How's my boy—my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How's my boy—my boy?'

FAREWELL.

CAN I see thee stand
On the looming land?
Dost thou wave with thy white hand
Farewell, farewell?
I could think that thou art near,
Thy sweet voice is in mine ear,
Farewell, farewell!
While I listen, all things seem
Singing in a singing dream,
Farewell, farewell!
Echoing in an echoing dream,
Farewell, farewell!

Yon boat upon the sea,
It floats 'twixt thee and me,
I see the boatman listless lie;
He cannot hear the cry
That in mine ears doth ring
Farewell, farewell!
Doth it pass him o'er and o'er,
Heard upon the shore behind,

Farewell, farewell!
Heard upon the ship before,
Farewell, farewell!
Like an arrow that can dart
Viewless thro' the viewless wind,
Plain on the quivering string,
And plain in the victim's heart?

Are there voices in the sky,
Farewell, farewell?
Am I mocked by the bright air,
Farewell, farewell?
The empty air that everywhere
Silvers back the sung reply,
Farewell, farewell!
While to and fro the tremulous accents fly,
Farewell, farewell!
Now shown, now shy,
Farewell, farewell!
Now song, now sigh,
Farewell, farewell!
Toy with the grasping heart that deems them nigh,
Come like blown bells in sudden wind and high,
Or far on furthest verge in lingering echoes die,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Oh, Love! what strange dumb Fate

Hath broken into voice to see us hope?
Surely we part to meet again?
Like one struck blind, I grope
In vain, in vain;
I cannot hold a single sense to tell
The meaning of this melancholy bell,
Farewell, farewell!
I touch them with my thought, and small and great
They join the swaying swell,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Aye, when I felt thee falling
On this heaving breast—
Aye, when I felt thee prest
Nearer, nearer, nearer,
Dearer, dearer, dearer—
Aye, while I saw thy face,
In that long last embrace,
The first, the last, the best—
Aye, while I held thee heart to heart;
My soul had pushed off from the shore,
And we were far apart;
I heard her calling, calling,
From the sea of nevermore
Farewell, farewell!
Fainter, fainter, like a bell
Rung from some receding ship,

Farewell, farewell !
The far and further knell
Did hardly reach my lip,
Farewell, farewell !
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Away, you omens vain !
Away, away !
What ! will you not be driven ?
My heart is trembling to your augury.
Hence ! Like a flight of seabirds at a gun,
A thousand ways they scatter back to Heaven,
Wheel lessening out of sight, and swoop again as one !
Farewell, farewell !
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Oh, Love ! what fatal spell
Is winding, winding round me to this singing ?
What hands unseen are flinging
The tightening mesh that I can feel too well ?
What viewless wings are winging
The siren music of this passing bell ?
Farewell, farewell !
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Arouse my heart ! arouse !
This is the sea : I strike these wooden walls :
The sailors come and go at my command :

I lift this cable with my hand :
I loose it and it falls :
Arouse ! she is not lost,
Thou art not plighted to a moonlight ghost,
But to a living spouse.
Arouse ! we only part to meet again !
Oh thou moody main,
Are thy mermaid cells a-ringing ?
Are thy mermaid sisters singing ?
The saddest shell of every cell
Ringing still, and ringing
Farewell, farewell !
To the sinking sighing singing,
To the floating flying singing,
To the deepening dying singing,
In the swell,
Farewell, farewell !
And the failing wailing ringing,
The reaming dreaming ringing
Of fainter shell in deeper cell,
To the sunken sunken singing,
Farewell, farewell !
Farewell, farewell !
Farewell, farewell, farewell ?

THE MILKMAID'S SONG.

TURN, turn, for my cheeks they burn,
Turn by the dale, my Harry!
Fill pail, fill pail,
He has turned by the dale,
And there by the stile waits Harry.
Fill, fill,
Fill pail, fill,
For there by the stile waits Harry!
The world may go round, the world may stand still,
But I can milk and marry,
Fillpail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh!
Oh, if we two
Stood down there now by the water,
I know who'd carry me over the ford
As brave as a soldier, as proud as a lord,
Tho' I don't live over the water.
Wheugh, wheugh! he 's whistling thro,'

He 's whistling 'the farmer's daughter.'
Give down, give down,
My crumpled brown !
He shall not take the road to the town,
For I 'll meet him beyond the water.
Give down, give down,
My crumpled brown !
And send me to my Harry.
The folk o' towns
May have silken gowns,
But I can milk and marry,
Fillpail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh ! he has whistled thro',
He has whistled thro' the water.
Fill, fill, with a will, a will,
For he's whistled thro' the water,
And he 's whistling down
The way to the town,
And it 's not ' the farmer's daughter ! '
Churr, churr ! goes the cockchafer,
The sun sets over the water,
Churr, churr ! goes the cockchafer,
I 'm too late for my Harry !
And, oh, if he goes a-soldiering,
The cows they may low, the bells they may ring,
But I 'll neither milk nor marry,

Fillpail,
Neither milk nor marry.

My brow beats on thy flank, Fillpail,
Give down, good wench, give down!
I know the primrose bank, Fillpail,
Between him and the town.
Give down, good wench, give down, Fillpail,
And he shall not reach the town!
Strain, strain! he 's whistling again,
He's nearer by half a mile.
More, more! Oh, never before
Were you such a weary while!
Fill, fill! he's crossed the hill,
I can see him down by the style,
He 's passed the hay, he 's coming this way,
He 's coming to me, my Harry!
Give silken gowns to the folk o' towns,
He 's coming to me, my Harry!
There's not so grand a dame in the land,
That she walks to-night with Harry!
Come late, come soon, come sun, come moon,
Oh, I can milk and marry,
Fillpail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh! he has whistled thro',
My Harry! my lad! my lover!

Set the sun and fall the dew,
Heigho, merry world, what's to do
That you 're smiling over and over?
Up on the hill and down in the dale,
And along the tree-tops over the vale
Shining over and over,
Low in the grass and high on the bough,
Shining over and over,
Oh, world, have you ever a lover?
You were so dull and cold just now,
Oh, world, have you ever a lover?
I could not see a leaf on the tree,
And now I could count them, one, two, three,
Count them over and over,
Leaf from leaf like lips apart,
Like lips apart for a lover.
And the hill-side beats with my beating heart,
And the apple-tree blushes all over,
And the May bough touched me and made me start,
And the wind breathes warm like a lover.

Pull, pull! and the pail is full,
And milking's done and over.
Who would not sit here under the tree?
What a fair fair thing 's a green field to see!
Brim, brim, to the rim, ah me!
I have set my pail on the daisies!

Quarrel who quarrel, and fight who fight,
But I'll bring my pail home every night
To love, and home, and Harry!
We 'll drink our can, we'll eat our cake,
There 's beer in the barrel, there 's bread in the bake,
The world may sleep, the world may wake,
But I shall milk and marry,
And marry,
I shall milk and marry.

THE GERMAN LEGION.

In the cot beside the water,
In the white cot by the water,
The white cot by the white water,
There they laid the German maid.

There they wound her, singing round her,
Deftly wound her, singing round her,
Softly wound her, singing round her,
In a shroud like a cloud.

And they decked her as they wound her,
With a wreath of leaves they bound her,
Lornest leaves they scattered round her,
Singing grief with every leaf.

Singing grief with every leaf,
Sadder grief with sadder leaf,
Sweeter leaf with sweeter grief,
So 't was sung in a dark tongue.

Like a latter lily lying,
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,
And Autumn vapours crying,
Pale and cold on misty mould,

So I saw her sweet and lowly,
Shining shining pale and holy,
Thro' the dim woe slowly slowly,
Said and sung in that dark tongue.

Such an awe her beauty lent her,
While they sang I dared not enter
That charmed ring where she was centre,
But I stood with stirring blood

Till the song fell like a billow,
And I saw them leave her pillow,
And go forth to the far willow,
For the wreath of virgin death.

And I stood beside her pillow,
While they plucked the distant willow,
And my heart rose like a billow
As I said to the pale dead—

'Oh, thou most fair and sweet virginity,
Of whom this heart that beats for thee doth know
Nor name nor story, that these limbs can be

For no man evermore, that thou must go
Cold to the cold, and that no eye shall see
That which thine unsolved womanhood doth owe
Of the incommunicable mystery
Shakes me with tears. I could kneel down by thee,
And o'er thy chill unmarriageable rest
Cry, "Thou who shalt no more at all be prest
To any heart, one moment come to this!
And feel me weeping with thy want of bliss,
And all the unpraisèd beauties of thy breast—
Thy breast which never shall a lover kiss!"'

Then I slowly left her pillow,
For they came back with the willow,
And my heart sinks as a billow
Doth implore towards the shore,

As I see the crown they weave her,
And I know that I must leave her,
And I feel that I could grieve her
Sad and sore for evermore.

And again they sang around her,
In a richer robe they wound her,
With the willow wreath they bound her,
And the loud song like a cloud

Of golden obscuration,
With the strange tongue of her nation,
Filled the house of lamentation,
Till she lay in melody,

Like a latter lily lying,
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,
And the Autumn vapours crying,
In a dream of evening gleam.

And I saw her sweet and lowly,
Shining shining pale and holy,
Thro' the dim woe slowly slowly
Said and sung in a dark tongue.

In the cot beside the water,
The white cot by the white water,
English cot by English water
That shall see the German sea.

A HEALTH TO THE QUEEN.

WHILE the thistle bears
Spears,
And the shamrock is green,
And the English rose
Blows,
A health to the Queen !
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen !
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen !

The thistle bears spears round its blossom,
Round its blossom the shamrock is green,
The rose grows and glows round the rose in its bosom,
We stand sword in hand round the Queen !
Our glory is green round the Queen !
We close round the rose, round the Queen !
The Queen, boys, the Queen ! a health to the Queen !
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen !

Last post I'd a note from that old aunt of mine,
'T was meant for a hook, but she called it a line;
She says, I don't know why we're going to fight,
She's sure I don't know—and I'm sure she's quite right;
She swears I haven't looked at one sole protocol;
Tantara! tantara! I haven't, 'pon my soul!
Soho, blow trumpeter,
Trumpeter, trumpeter!
Soho, blow trumpeter, onward's the cry!
Fall, tyrants, fall—the devil care why!
A health to the Queen; a health to the Queen!
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!

My granny came down—'pour vous voir, mon barbare,'
She brought in her pocket a map—du Tartare—
Drawn up, so she vowed, 'par un homme ah! si bon!'
With a plan for campaigning old Hal, en haut ton.
With here you may trick him, and here you may prick him,
And here—if you do it en roi—you may lick him,
But there he is sacred, and yonder—Oh, la!
He's as dear a sweet soul as your late grandpapa!
Soho, blow trumpeter,
Trumpeter, trumpeter!
Blow the charge, trumpeter, blare, boy, blare!
Fall, tyrants, fall—the devil care where!
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen!

Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!

My cousin, the Yankee, last night did his best
To prove 'the Czar—bless you's—no worse than the rest.'
We wheeled the decanters out on to the lawn,
And he argued—and spat—in a circle till dawn.
Quoth I, 'If the game's half as thick as you say,
The more need for hounds, lad! Hunt's up! Harkaway!'
Soho, blow trumpeter!
Trumpeter, trumpeter!
Tally-ho, trumpeter, over the ditch—
Over the ditch, boys, the broad ditch at Dover!
Hands slack, boys, heels back, boys,
Yohoicks! we're well over!
Soho, blow, trumpeter! blow us to cover!
Blow, boy, blow,
Berlin, or Moscow,
Schœnbrun, or Rome,
So Reynard's at home,
The devil care which!
Hark, Evans! hark, Campbell! hark, Cathcart!—Halloo!
Heydey, harkaway! good men and true!
Harkaway to the brook,
You won't land in clover!
Leap and look!
High and dry!
Tantivy, full cry!

Full cry up the hill !
Hurrah, and it's over !
A burst and a kill.
While the thistle bears
Spears,
And the shamrock is green,
And the English rose
Blows,
A health to the Queen !
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen !
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen !
The Queen, boys, the Queen ! the Queen, boys, the Queen !
Full cry, high and dry, boys,
A to the Queen !

WOE IS ME.

FAR in the cradling sky,
Dawn opes his baby eye,
Then I awake and cry,
Woe is me !

Morn, the young hunter gay,
Chases the shadows gray,
Then I go forth and say,
Woe is me !

Noon ! drunk with oil and wine,
Tho' not a grief is thine,
Yet shalt thou shake with mine !
Woe is me !

Eve kneeleth sad and calm,
Bearing the martyr's palm ;
I shriek above her psalm,
Woe is me !

Night, hid in her black hair
From eyes she cannot dare,
Lies loud with fierce despair ;
Then I sit silent where
She cries from her dark lair
Woe is me !

THE YOUNG MAN'S SONG.

At last the curse has run its date !
The heavens grow clear above,
And on the purple plains of Hate,
We'll build the throne of Love !

One great heroic reign divine
Shall mock the Elysian isles,
And love in arms shall only shine
Less fair than Love in smiles !

Old Clio, burn thine ancient scroll,
The scroll of Rome and Greece !
Our war shall be a parable
On all the texts of peace,

And saints look down, with eyes of praise,
Where on our modern field
The new Samaritan forelays
The wrongs that other healed !

What virtue is beyond our prize?
What deed beneath yon sun
More Godlike than the prodigies
We mortal men have done?

We wearied of the lagging steed,
The dove had not a quill
To fledge the imaginable speed
Of our wild shaft of will;

'Ah, could each word be winged with wind,
And speech be swift as sight!'
We cursed the long arms of that blind
Dumb herald on the height,

Dark struggling with a mystery
He daily hid in shades,
As a ghost steams up on the eye,
Begins a Fate and fades.

'If, like a man, dull space could hear!
If, like a man, obey!'
We seized this earthly hemisphere,
This senseless skull of clay.

We drew from Heaven a breath of flame,
And thro' the lifeless whole
Did breathe it till the orb became
One brain of burning soul.

As he o'er whom a tyrant reigns,
It waits our sovran word,
And thinks along the living veins
The lightnings of its lord!

What Force can meet our matchless might?
What Power is not our slave?
We bound the angel of the light,
We scourged him in a cave.

And when we saw the prisoner pine
For his immortal land,
We wrung a ransom, half divine,
From that celestial hand

Whose skill the heavy chain subdued,
And all a captive's woe
Did tame to such a tempered good
As mortal eyes can know.

Who comes, who comes, o'er mountains laid,
Vales lifted, straightened ways?
'Tis he! the mightier horse we made
To serve our nobler days!

But now, unheard, I saw afar
His cloud of windy mane,
Now, level as a blazing star,
He thunders thro' the plain!

The life he needs, the food he loves,
  This cold earth bears no more;
He fodders on the eternal groves
  That heard the dragons roar,

Strong with the feast he roars and runs,
  And, in his maw unfurled,
Evolves the folded fires of suns
  That lit a grander world!

Yon bird, the swiftest in the sky,
  Before him sprang, but he
Has passed her as a wind goes by
  A struggler in the sea.

With forward beak and forward blows,
  She slides back from his side;
While ever as the monster goes,
  With needless power and pride,

Disdainful from his fiery jaws
  He snorts his vital heat,
And, easy as his shadow, draws,
  Long-drawn, the living street.

He 's gone! Methinks that over him,
  Like Curtius in the abyss,
I see great gulphs close rim to rim,
  And Past and Future kiss!

Oh, Man! as from the flood sublime
Some alp rose calm and slow,
So from the exhaling floods of time
I see thy stature grow.

Long since thy royal brow, uncrowned,
Allegiant nature saw,
Long since thine eye of empire frowned
The heavenly thrones to awe;

And now the monarch's breast apart
Divides the sinking spray,
Fit dome for such gigantic heart
As warms so vast a sway.

Far o'er the watery wilds I see
Thy great right-arm upsurge,
Thy right-hand, armed with victory,
Is sunburst on the verge!

Arise, arise! oh, sword! and sweep
One universal morn!
Another throe, thou labouring Deep,
And all the god is born!

So sang a youth of glorious blood.
Below, the wind-hawk shook her wings,
And lower, in its kingdom, stood
A tower of ancient kings.

Above, the autumn sky was blue,
Far round the golden world was fair,
And, gun by gun, the ramparts blew
A battle on the air.

DEAD-MAID'S-POOL.

Oh water, water—water deep and still,
In this hollow of the hill,
Thou helenge well o'er which the long reeds lean,
Here a stream and there a stream,
And thou so still, between,
Thro' thy coloured dream,
Thro' the drownèd face
Of this lone leafy place,
Down, down, so deep and chill,
I see the pebbles gleam!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Bending o'er the well,
Why there thou bendest,
Kind hearts can tell.
'Tis that the pool is deep,
'Tis that—a single leap,
And the pool closes:
And in the solitude
Of this wild mountain wood,

None, none, would hear her cry,
From this bank where she stood
To that peak in the sky
Where the cloud dozes.

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
That art so sweet and good,
If any creeping thing
Among the summer games in the wild roses
Fall from its airy swing,
(While all its pigmy kind
Watch from some imminent rose-leaf half uncurled)—
I know thou hast it full in mind
(While yet the drowning minim lives,
And blots the shining water where it strives),
To touch it with a finger soft and kind,
As when the gentle sun, ere day is hot,
Feels for a little shadow in a grot,
And gives it to the shades behind the world.

And oh! if some poor fool
Should seek the fatal pool,
Thine arms—ah, yes! I know
For this thou watchest days, and months, and years,
For this dost bend beside
The lone and lorn well-side,
The guardian angel of the doom below,

Content if, once an age, thy helping hand
May lift repentant madness to the land :
Content to hear the cry
Of living love from lips that would have died :
To seem awhile endowed
With all thy limbs did save,
And in that voice they drew out of the grave,
To feel thy dumb desire for once released aloud,
And all thy muffled century
Repaid in one wild hour of sobs, and smiles, and tears.

Aye, aye, I envy thee,
Pitiful ash-tree !

Water, water—water deep and still,
In the hollow of the hill,
Water, water, well I wot,
Thro' the weary hours,
Well I wot thee lying there,
As fair as false, as false as fair.
The crows they fly o'er,
The small birds flit about,
The stream it ripples in, the stream it ripples out,
But what eye ever knew
A rinkle wimple thee ?
And what eye shall see
A rinkle wimple thee
Evermore ?
Thro' thy gauds and mocks,

All thy thin enchantment thro'—
The green delusion of thy bowers,
The cold flush of thy feignèd flowers,
All the treacherous state
Of fair things small and great,
That are and are not,
Well I wot thee shining there,
As fair as false, as false as fair.
Thro' the liquid rocks,
Thro' the watery trees,
Thro' the grass that never grew,
Thro' a face God never made,
Thro' the frequent gain and loss
Of the cold cold shine and shade,
Thro' the subtle fern and moss,
Thro' the humless, hiveless bees,
Round the ghosts of buds asleep,
Thro' the disembodied rose,
Waving, waving in the deep,
Where never wind blows,
I look down, and see far down,
In clear depths that do nothing hide,
Green in green, and brown in brown,
The long fish turn and glide!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Bending o'er the water—
Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Hadst thou a daughter?

Ash-tree, ash-tree, let me draw near,
Ash-tree, ash-tree, a word in thine ear!

Thou art wizen and white, ash-tree;
Other trees have gone on,
Have gathered and grown,
Have bourgeoned and borne:
Thou hast wasted and worn.

Thy knots are all eyes;
Every knot a dumb eye,
That has seen a sight
And heard a cry.

Thy leaves are dry:
The summer has not gone by,
But they're withered and dead,
Like locks round a head
That is bald with a secret sin,
That is scorched by a hell within.

Thy skin
Is withered and wan,
Like a guilty man:
It was thin,
Aye, silken and thin,
It is houghed
And ploughed,
Like a murderer's skin.

Thou hast no shoots nor wands,
All thy arms turn to the deep,
All thy twigs are crooked,
Twined and twisted,
Fingered and fisted,
Like one who had looked
On wringing hands
'Till his hands were wrung in his sleep.

Pardon my doubt of thee,
What is this
In the very groove
Of thy right arm?
There is not a snake
So yellow and red,
There is not a toad
So sappy and dread!
It doth not move,
It doth not hiss—
Ash-tree—for God's sake—
Hast thou known
What hath not been said
And the summer sun
Cannot keep it warm,
And the living wood
Cannot shut it down!
And it grows out of thee
And will be told,

Bloody as blood,
And yellow as gold!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
That once wert so green!
Ash-tree, ash-tree!
What hast thou seen?
Was I a mother—nay or aye?
Am I childless—aye nor nay?
Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Bending o'er the water!
Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Give me my daughter!
Curse the water,
Curse thee,
Ash-tree,
Bending o'er the water!
Leaf on the tree,
Flower on the stem,
Curse thee,
And curse them!
Trunk and shoot,
Herb and weed,
Bud and fruit,
Blossom and seed,
Above and below,
About and about,
Inside and out,

Grown and to grow,
Curse you all,
Great and small,
That cannot give back my daughter!

But if there were any,
Among so many,
Any small thing that did lie sweet for her,
Any newt or marish-worm that, shrinking
Under the pillow of the water weed,
Left her a cleaner bed,
Any least leaves that fell with little plashes,
And sinking, sinking,
Sank soft and slow, and settled on her lashes,
And did what was so meet for her,
Them I do not curse.

See, see up the glen,
The evening sun agen!
It falls upon the water,
It falls upon the grass,
Thro' the birches, thro' the firs,
Thro' the alders, catching gold,
Thro' the bracken and the brier,
Goes the evening fire
To the bush-linnet's nest.

There between us and the west,

Dost thou see the angels pass?
Thro' the air, with streaming hair,
The golden angels pass?
Hold, hold! for mercy, hold!
I know thee! ah, I know thee!
I know thou wilt not pass me so—
The gray old woman is ready to go.
Call me to thee, call me to thee,
My daughter! oh, my daughter!

THE SAILOR'S RETURN.

THIS morn I lay a-dreaming,
This morn, this merry morn,
When the cock crew shrill from over the hill,
I heard a bugle horn.

And thro' the dream I was dreaming,
There sighed the sigh of the sea,
And thro' the dream I was dreaming,
This voice came singing to me.

'High over the breakers,
Low under the lee,
Sing ho
The billow,
And the lash of the rolling sea!

'Boat, boat, to the billow,
Boat, boat, to the lee!
Love on thy pillow,
Art thou dreaming of me?

'Billow, billow, breaking,
Land us low on the lee !
For sleeping or waking,
Sweet love, I am coming to thee !

'High, high, o'er the breakers,
Low, low, on the lee,
Sing ho !
The billow
That brings me back to thee !'

THE WIDOW'S LULLABY.

SHE droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

The sun comes up from the lea,
As he who will never come more
Came up that first day to her door,
When the ship furled her sails by the shore,
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

The sun goes down in the sea,
As he who will never go more
Went down that last day from her door,
When the ship set her sails from the shore,
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

The year comes glad o'er the lea,
As he who will never come more,
Never, ah never!
Came up that first day to her door,
When the ship furled her sails by the shore,
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.
Never, ah never!
He who will come again, never!

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

The year goes sad to the sea,
As he who will never go more
For ever went down from her door,
Ever, for ever!
When the ship set her sails by the shore,
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.
Ever, for ever!
For ever went down from her door.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

A gun, and a flash, and a gun,
The ship lies again where she lay!

High and low, low and high, in the sun,
There 's a boat, a boat on the bay!
High and low, low and high, in the sun,
All as she saw it that day,
When he came who shall never come more,
And the ship furled her sails by the shore.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

All as she saw it that day,
With a gun, and a flash, and a gun,
The ship lies again where she lay,
And they run, and they ride, and they run,
Merry, merry, merry, down the merry highway,
To the boat, high and low in the sun.
Nearer and nearer she hears the rolling drum,
Clearer and clearer she hears the cry, 'They come,'
Far and near runs the cheer to her ear once so dear,
Merry, merry, merry, up the merry highway,
As it ran when he came that day
And said, 'Wilt thou be my dearie?
Oh, wilt thou be my dearie?
My boat is dry in the bay,
And I 'll love till thou be weary!'
And she could not say him nay,
For his bonny eyes o' blue,
And never was true-love so true,

To never so kind a dearie,
As he who will never love more,
When the ship furls her sails by the shore.

Then she shakes like a wind-stricken lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALK.

The Laird is dead, the laird is dead,
An' dead is cousin John,
His henchmen ten, an' his sax merrie men,
Forbye the steward's son.

An' his ain guid gray that he strode sae gay
When hunt was up an' on,
An' the win' blew fair, an' the grews pu'd sair,
An' dawn was on Maol-don,
An' the skeigh steeds neigh'd, an' the slot-hounds bay'd,
An' up gaed the mornin' sun,
An' awa' gaed the deer wi' the merrie men's cheer,
Awa' owre the auld Maol-don,
An' awa' wi' a shout ran the rabble an' the rout,
An' awa' rode cousin John,
Wi' his horn, his horn, thro' the merry merry morn,
His hunter's horn sae shrill!
An' 't was 'Ho, heigho, hereawa',
Hereawa', hereawa'!
Ho, heigho, hereawa'!'
A' roun' the hill!

Walie ! walié ! they're a' gane dead,
A' owre the seas an' awa'
The laird an' his men, the sax an' the ten,
They gaed to fight and to fa'.
An' walie, an' wae, an' hech ! the weary day !
The laird is dead an' a' !

A' in ae grave by the margent o' the wave
Thegither they lay doun,
Sax feet deep, where dead men sleep,
A' i' the faeman's grun'.

Foremost i' the van, wi' his bagpipes i' his han',
The steward's ae braw son,
An' next the young laird—gin the guid Lord had spared !-
A' as he led them on,
Wi' his bonnie brow bare an' his lang fair hair,
An' his bluidy braid-sword drawn ;
An' hard by his chief, that in life was sae lief,
In death cam cousin John,
Wi' his horn, his horn, thro' the merry merry morn,
His hunter's horn sae shrill
When 't was 'Ho, heigho, hereawa',
Hereawa', hereawa' !
Ho, heigho, hereawa' ! '
A' roun' the hill !

Gin ony uphauld the young Laird lies cauld,
An' cauld lies cousin John,

Sax feet deep, as dead men sleep,
A' i' the faeman's grun,'
A' in ae grave by the margent o' the wave,
Where doun they lay that day,
Wi' the henchmen ten, an' the sax merrie men,
Ask the gaberlunzie gray.
Step an' step, step an' step, gaed the gaberlunzie gray,
Faint an lame, wi' empty wame, he hirples on his way.
Step an' step, step an' step, an' owre the hill maun he,
His head is bent, his pipe is brent, he has na a bawbee.
Step an' step, step an' step, he totters thro' the mirk,
He hears the fox amang the cocks, the houlet by the kirk.
Step an' step, step an' step, an' as he climbs the hill
The auld auld moon is gaun doun ; the nicht grows cauld an' still,
The breathin' kye aroun' him lie, the ingle-light is gane,
He wakes the yowes amang the knowes, an' still he gangs his lane.
His slow steps rouse the blethrin' grouse, the peewit fa's an' squeals,
The nicht-goat bleats amang the peats, an' still he speils an' speils,
Step an' step, step an' step, an' up the craigie stark,
An' mony a stane ane after ane gangs snirtlin' doun the dark.
Step an' step, step an' step, that gaberlunzie gray,
A' win's seem tint far far ahint as he gangs on his way.

He hears the burn amang the fern, he hears the stoatie
cheep,
He hears the rustle, an' flit an' fussle, as the kae shifts
her roost in her sleep.
Step an' step, step an' step, he gangs wi' troubled breath,
He feels the silence a' aboon, he feels the warl beneath ;
Wheet an' wheet about his feet the startit mousie ran,
An' as he gaes his riskin' claes aye gar him start an' stan';
An' as he stan's wi' knotted han's, an' leans his chitterin'
head,
He hears the sod his steps have trod a-tirlin' to his tread;
An' crisp foot-fa', an' sibblin sma' o' stealthy cony
crappin',
An' click o' bat aboon his hat, like fairy fingers snappin',
An' ilka yird that ticked an' stirred, where swairdie there
is nae,
As elfin shools the tittlin' mools gar'd rinkle doun the
brae ;
An' safter soun' alang the groun' the grass-taps thro' an'
thro',
Gin owre the fiel's the wee bit chiel's were dealin' out the
dew.
Step an' step, step an' step, an' hech ! his freezin' bluid !
He gaes into the silence as ane gaes into a wood.
The mair the height, mair still the nicht, an' faster did he
gang,
Step an' step, an' then a step, an' he listens hard an'
lang!

He listens twice, he listens thrice, but why he disna ken ;
His cauld skin skeared, an' clipped his beard ; he stops an' lists agen.
There's somethin' creepin' thro' his banes, there's somethin' stirs his hair :
'Tis mair than use, he canna choose, he listens ten times mair !
He pits his pack fra his auld back, he sits him on a stane,
His eyelids fa', he gapes his jaw, an' harks wi' might an' main,
The mair he list the mair uprist his gray-locks wi' affright,
Till ilka hair that he might wear was stiff an' stark upright.
His sick heart stops, the low moon drops, the nicht is eerie chill !
Wi' sudden shout the dead cry out, like hunters at a kill,
Full cry, full cry, the win's sweep by, a horn, a horn is shrill !
An' 'tis 'Ho, heigho, hereawa',
Hereawa', hereawa' !
Ho, heigho, hereawa' ! '
A' roun' the hill !

LIBERTY TO M. LE DIPLOMATE.

Thou fool who treatest with the sword, and not
With the strong arm that wields it! Thou insane
Who seest the dew-drops on the lion's mane,
But dost forget the lion! Oh thou sot,
Hugging thy drunken dream! Thou idiot
Who makest a covenant against the rain
With autumn leaves! Thou atheist who dost chain
This miserable body that can rot,
And thinkest it Me! Fool! for the swordless arm
Shall strike thee dead. Madman, the lion wakes,
And with one shake is dry. Sot, the day breaks
Shall sober even thee. Idiot, one storm
And thou art bare. Atheist, the corse is thine,
But lo, the unfettered soul immortal and divine!

AN EVENING DREAM.

I'M leaning where you loved to lean in eventides of old,
The sun has sunk an hour ago behind the treeless wold,
In this old oriel that we loved how oft I sit forlorn,
Gazing, gazing, up the vale of green and waving corn.
The summer corn is in the ear, thou knowest what I see
Up the long wide valley, and from seldom tree to tree,
The serried corn, the serried corn, the green and serried corn,
From the golden morn till night, from the moony night till morn.
I love it, morning, noon, and night, in sunshine and in rain,
For being here it seems to say, 'The lost come back again.'
And being here as green and fair as those old fields we knew,
It says, 'The lost when they come back, come back unchanged and true.'
But more than at the shout of morn, or in the sleep of noon,
Smiling with a smiling star, or wan beneath a wasted moon,

I love it, soldier brother! at this weird dim hour, for then
The serried ears are swords and spears, and the fields are fields of men.
Rank on rank in faultless phalanx stern and still I can discern,
Phalanx after faultless phalanx in dumb armies still and stern;
Army on army, host on host, till the bannered nations stand,
As the dead may stand for judgment silent on the o'er-peopled land.
Not a bayonet stirs: down sinks the awful twilight, dern and dun,
On an age that waits its leader, on a world that waits the sun.
Then your dog—I know his voice—cries from out the courtyard nigh,
And my love too well interprets all that long and mournful cry!
In my passion that thou art not, lo! I see thee as thou art,
And the pitying fancy brings thee to assuage the anguished heart.
'Oh my brother!' and my bosom's throb of welcome at the word,
Claps a hundred thousand hands, and all my legions hail thee lord.

And the vast unmotioned myriads, front to front, as at a breath,
Live and move to martial music, down the devious dance of death.
Ah, thou smilest, scornful brother, at a maiden's dream of war!
And thou shakest back thy locks as if—a glow-worm for thy star—
I dubbed thee with a blade of grass, by earthlight, in a fairy ring,
Knight o' the garter o' Queen Mab, or lord in waiting to her king.
Brother, in thy plumèd pride of tented field and turretted tower,
Smiling brother, scornful brother, darest thou watch with me one hour?
Even now some fate is near, for I shake and know not why,
And a wider sight is orbing, orbing, on my moistened eye,
And I feel a thousand flutterings round my soul's still vacant field,
Like the ravens and the vultures o'er a carnage yet unkilled.
Hist! I see the stir of glamour far upon the twilight wold,
Hist! I see the vision rising! List! and as I speak behold!

These dull mists are mists of morning, and behind yon eastern hill,
The hot sun abides my bidding: he shall melt them when I will.
All the night that now is past, the foe hath laboured for the day,
Creeping thro' the stealthy dark, like a tiger to his prey.
Throw this window wider! Strain thine eyes along the dusky vale!
Art thou cold with horror? Has thy bearded cheek grown pale?
'Tis the total Russian host, flooding up the solemn plain,
Secret as a silent sea, mighty as a moving main!
Oh, my country! is there none to rouse thee to the rolling sight?
Oh thou gallant sentinel who has watched so oft so well, must thou sleep this only night?
So hath the shepherd lain on a rock above a plain,
Nor beheld the flood that swelled from some embowelled mount of woe,
Waveless, foamless, sure and slow,
Silent o'er the vale below,
Till nigher still and nigher comes the seeth of fields on fire,
And the thrash of falling trees, and the steam of rivers dry,
And before the burning flood the wild things of the wood
Skulk and scream, and fight, and fall, and flee, and fly.

A gun! and then a gun! I' the far and early sun
Dost thou see by yonder tree a fleeting redness rise,
As if, one after one, ten poppies red had blown,
And shed in a blinking of the eyes?
They have started from their rest with a bayonet at each breast,
Those watchers of the west who shall never watch again!
'Tis nought to die, but oh, God's pity on the woe
Of dying hearts that know they die in vain!
Beyond yon backward height that meets their dying sight,
A thousand tents are white, and a slumbering army lies.
'Brown Bess,' the sergeant cries, as he loads her while he dies,
'Let this devil's deluge reach them, and the good old cause is lost.'
He dies upon the word, but his signal gun is heard,
Yon ambush green is stirred, yon labouring leaves are tost,
And a sudden sabre waves, and like dead from opened graves,
A hundred men stand up to meet a host.
Dumb as death, with bated breath,
Calm upstand that fearless band,
And the dear old native land, like a dream of sudden sleep,
Passes by each manly eye that is fixed so stern and dry
On the tide of battle rolling up the steep.

They hold their silent ground, I can hear each fatal sound
Upon that summer mound which the morning sunshine warms,
The word so brief and shrill that rules them like a will,
The sough of moving limbs, and the clank and ring of arms.
'Fire!' and round that green knoll the sudden war-clouds roll,
And from the tyrant's ranks so fierce an answ'ring blast
Of whirling death came back that the green trees turned to black,
And dropped their leaves in winter as it passed.
A moment on each side the surging smoke is wide,
Between the fields are green, and around the hills are loud,
But a shout breaks out, and lo! they have rushed upon the foe,
As the living lightning leaps from cloud to cloud.
Fire and flash, smoke and crash,
The fogs of battle close o'er friends and foes, and they are gone!
Alas, thou bright-eyed boy! alas, thou mother's joy!
With thy long hair so fair, thou didst so bravely lead them on!
I faint with pain and fear. Ah, heaven! what do I hear?
A trumpet-note so near?

What are these that race like hunters at a chase?
Who are these that run a thousand men as one?
What are these that crash the trees far in the waving rear?
Fight on, thou young hero! there's help upon the way!
The light horse are coming, the great guns are coming,
The Highlanders are coming;—good God give us the day!
Hurrah for the brave and the leal! Hurrah for the strong and the true!
Hurrah for the helmets of steel! Hurrah for the bonnets o' blue!
A run and a cheer, the Highlanders are here! a gallop and a cheer, the light horse are here!
A rattle and a cheer, the great guns are here!
With a cheer they wheel round and face the foe!
As the troopers wheel about, their long swords are out,
With a trumpet and a shout, in they go!
Like a yawning ocean green, the huge host gulphs them in,
But high o'er the rolling of the flood,
Their sabres you may see like lights upon the sea
When the red sun is going down in blood.
Again, again, again! And the lights are on the wane!
Ah, Christ! I see them sink, light by light,
As the gleams go one by one when the great sun is down,
And the sea rocks in foam beneath the night.

Aye, the great sun is low, and the waves of battle flow
O'er his honoured head; but, oh, we mourn not he is down,
For to-morrow he shall rise to fill his country's eyes,
As he sails up the skies of renown!
Ye may yell, but ye shall groan!
Ye shall buy them bone for bone!
Now, tyrant, hold thine own! blare the trumpet, peal the drum!
From yonder hill-side dark, the storm is on you! Hark!
Swift as lightning, loud as thunder, down they come!
As on some Scottish shore, with mountains frowning o'er,
The sudden tempests roar from the glen,
And roll the tumbling sea in billows to the lee,
Came the charge of the gallant Highlandmen!
And as one beholds the sea tho' the wind he cannot see,
But by the waves that flee knows its might,
So I tracked the Highland blast by the sudden tide that past
O'er the wild and rolling vast of the fight.
Yes, glory be to God! they have stemmed the foremost flood!
I lay me on the sod and breathe again!
In the precious moments won, the bugle call has gone
To the tents where it never rang in vain,
And lo, the landscape wide is red from side to side,
And all the might of England loads the plain!

Like a hot and bloody dawn, across the horizon drawn,
While the host of darkness holds the misty vale,
As glowing and as grand our bannered legions stand,
And England's flag unfolds upon the gale!
At that great sign unfurled, as morn moves o'er the world
When God lifts His standard of light,
With a tumult and a voice, and a rushing mighty noise,
Our long line moves forward to the fight.
Clarion and clarion defying,
Sounding, resounding, replying,
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,
Near and far
The to and fro storm of the never-done hurrahing,
Thro' the bright weather banner and feather rising and falling, bugle and fife
Calling, recalling—for death or for life—
Our host moved on to the war,
While England, England, England, England, England!
Was blown from line to line near and far,
And like the morning sea, our bayonets you might see,
Come beaming, gleaming, streaming,
Streaming, gleaming, beaming,
Beaming, gleaming, streaming, to the war.
Clarion and clarion defying,
Sounding, resounding, replying,
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,
Near and far

The to and fro storm of the never-done hurrahing,
Thro' the bright weather, banner and feather rising and
falling, bugle and fife
Calling, recalling—for death or for life—
Our long line moved forward to the war.

IN WAR-TIME.

A PSALM OF THE HEART.

SCOURGE us as Thou wilt, oh Lord God of Hosts;
Deal with us, Lord, according to our transgressions;
But give us Victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Lift Thy wrath up from the day of battle,
And set it on the weight of other days!
Draw Thy strength from us for many days,
So Thou be with us on the day of battle,
And give us victory.
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Let the strong arm be as the flag o' the river,
The withered flag that flappeth o'er the river,
When all the flood is dried out of the river;

Let the brave heart be as a drunkard's bosom,
When the thick fume is frozen in the bosom,
And the bare sin lies shivering in the bosom;

Let the bold eye be sick and crazed with midnight,
Strained and cracked with aching days of midnight,
Swarmed and foul with creeping shapes of midnight;

So Thou return upon the day of battle,
So we be strong upon the day of battle,
Be drunk with Thee upon the day of battle,
So Thou shine o'er us in the day of battle,
Shine in the faces of our enemies,
Hot in the faces of our enemies,
Hot o'er the battle and the victory.
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Shame us not, oh Lord, before the wicked!
In our hidden places let Thy wrath
Afflict us; in the secret of our sin
Convince us; be the bones within our flesh
Marrowed with fire, and all the strings of life
Strung to the twang of torture; let the stench
Of our own strength torment us; the desire
Of our own glorious image in the sea
Consume us; shake the darkness like a tree,
And fill the night with mischiefs,—blights and dwales,
Weevils, and rots, and cankers! But, oh Lord,
Humble us not upon the day of battle,
Hide not Thy face upon the day of battle,
Let it shine o'er us on the day of battle,

Shine in the faces of our enemies,
Hot in the faces of our enemies,
Hot o'er the battle and the victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Tho' Thou shouldst glorify us above measure,
Yet will we not forget that Thou art God!
Honour our land, oh Lord! honour our land!

Be Thou her armour in the day of battle,
Whereon the sword of man shall strike in vain!
For Thou canst find the place and leave no scar,
Sting of bee, nor fairy-spot nor mole,
Yet kill the germ within the core of life.

Oh lead her in the glory of her beauty,
So that the nations wonder at her beauty!
For Thou canst take her beauty by the heart
And throw the spout of sorrow from the fountain,
The flood of sorrow thro' the veins of joy.

Let her soul look out of her eyes of glory,
Lighten, oh Lord, from awful eyes of glory!
For Thou canst touch the soul upon its throne,
The fortressed soul upon its guarded throne,
Nor scorch the sweet air of the populous splendour
That comes and goes about a leprous king.

Therefore fear not to bless us, oh Lord God!
And give us victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Sight of home, if Thou wilt; kiss of love,
If Thou wilt; children at the knees of peace,
If Thou wilt; parents weeping in the door
Of welcome, if Thou wilt; but victory,
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Pangs if Thou wilt, oh Lord! Death if Thou wilt!
Labour and famine, frost and fire and storm,
Silent plague, and hurricane of battle,
The field-grave, and the wolf-grave, and the sea!
But victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Consider, Lord, the oppressions of the oppressor,
And give us victory!
The tyrant sitteth on his golden throne
In palaces of silver, to his gates
The meeting winds blow good from all the world.
Who hath undone the mountain where he locks
His treasure? In the armoury of hell
Which engine is not his? His name infects
The air of every zone, and to each tongue

From Hecla to the Ganges adds a word
That kills all terms of pride. His servants sit
In empires round his empire; and outspread
As land beneath the water, oh, my God,
His kingdoms bear the half of all Thy stars!
Who hath out-told his princes? Who hath summed
His captains? From the number of his hosts
He should forget a nation and not lack!
Therefore, oh Lord God, give us victory!

The serf is in his hut; the unsacred sire
Who can beget no honour. Lo his mate
Dim thro' the reeking garlic—she whose womb
Doth shape his ignorant shame, and whose young slave
In some far field thickens a knouted hide
For baser generations. Their dull eyes
Are choked with feudal welfare; their rank limbs
Steam in the stye of plenty; their rude tongues,
That fill the belly from the common trough,
Discharge in gobbets of as gross a speech
That other maw the heart. Nor doth the boor
Refuse his owner's chattel tho' she breed
The rich man's increase, nor doth she disdain
The joyless usage of such limbs as toil
Yoked with the nobler ox, and take as mute
A beast's infliction; at her stolid side
The girl that shall be such a thing as she,
Suckles the babe she would not, with the milk

A bondmaid owes her master. Lord, Thou seest!
Therefore, oh Lord God, give us victory!

The captive straineth at the dungeon-grate.
Behold, oh Lord, the secret of the rock,
The dungeon, and the captive, and the chain!
Tho' it be hidden under forest leaves,
Tho' it be on the mountains among clouds,
Tho' they point to it as a crag o' the hill,
And say concerning it that the wind waileth,
Thou knowest the inner secret and the sin!
I see his white face at the dungeon bars,
As snow between the bars of winter trees.
He sinketh down upon the dungeon stones,
His white face making light within the dungeon,
The claspèd whiteness of his praying hands
Flickering a little light within the dungeon.
And thro' the darkness, thro' the cavern darkness,
Like to a runnel in a savage wood,
Sweet thro' the horror of the hollow dark
He sings the song of home in the strange land.

How long, oh Lord of thunder? Victory!
Lord God of vengeance, give us victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

A SHOWER IN WAR-TIME.

RAIN, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain!
Rain, rain, warm and sweet,
Summer wood lush leafy and loud,
With note of a throat that ripples and rings,
Sad sole sweet from her central seat,
Bubbling and trilling,
Filling, filling, filling
The shady space of the green dim place
With an odour of melody,
Till all the noon is thrilling,
And the great wood hangs in the balmy day
Like a cloud with an angel in the cloud,
And singing because she sings!

In the sheltering wood,
At that hour I stood;
I saw that in that hour
Great round drops, clear round drops,
Grew on every leaf and flower,
And its hue so fairly took

And faintly, that each tinted elf
Trembled with a rarer self,
Even as if its beauty shook
With passion to a tenderer look.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain!
Rain, rain, warm and sweet,
Summer wood lush leafy and loud,
With note of a throat that ripples and rings,
Sad sole sweet from her central seat,
Bubbling and trilling,
Filling, filling, filling
The shady space of the green dim place
With an odour of melody,
Till all the noon is thrilling,
And the great wood hangs in the balmy day,
Like a cloud with an angel in the cloud,
And singing because she sings!

Then out of the sweet warm weather
There came a little wind sighing, sighing:
Came to the wood sighing, and sighing went in,
Sighed thro' the green grass, and o'er the leaves brown,
Sighed to the dingle, and, sighing, lay down,
While all the flowers whispered together.
Then came swift winds after her who was flying,
Swift bright winds with a jocund din,

Sought her in vain, her boscage was so good,
And spread like baffled revellers thro' the wood.
Then, from bough, and leaf, and bell,
The great round drops, the clear round drops,
In fitful cadence drooped and fell—
Drooped and fell as if some wanton air
Were more apparent here and there,
Sphered on a favourite flower in dewy kiss,
Grew heavy with delight and dropped with bliss.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain;
Rain, rain, still and sweet,
For the winds have hushed again,
And the nightingale is still,
Sleeping in her central seat.
Rain, rain, summer rain,
Silent as the summer heat.
Doth it fall, or doth it rise?
Is it incense from the hill,
Or bounty from the skies?
Or is the face of earth that lies
Languid, looking up on high,
To the face of Heaven so nigh
That their balmy breathings meet?

Rain, rain, summer rain,
On the wood and on the plain:

Rain, rain, rain, until
The tall wet trees no more athirst,
As each chalice green doth fill,
See the pigmy nations nurst
Round their distant feet, and throw
The nectar to the herbs below.
The droughty herbs, without a sound,
Drink it ere it reach the ground.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain,
And round me like a dropping well,
The great round drops they fell and fell.

I say not War is good or ill;
Perchance they may slay, if they will,
Who killing love, and loving kill.

I do not join yon captive's din;
Some man among us without sin
Perhaps may rightly lock him in.

I do not grant the Tyrant's plea;
The slaves potential to be free
Already are the Powers that be.

Whether our bloodsheds flow or cease,
I know that as the years increase,
The flower of all is human peace.

'The Flower.' Vertumnus hath repute
O'er Flora; yet methinks the fruit
But alter ego of the root;

And that which serves our fleshly need,
Subserves the blossom that doth feed
The soul which is the life indeed.

Nor well he deems who deems the rose
Is for the roseberry, nor knows
The roseberry is for the rose.

And Autumn's garnered treasury,
But prudent Nature's guarantee
That Summer evermore shall be,

And yearly, once a year, complete
That top and culmen exquisite
Whereto the slanting seasons meet.

Whether our bloodsheds flow or cease,
I know that, as the years increase,
The flower of all is human peace.

'The flower.' Yet whether shall we sow
A blossom or a seed? I know
The flower will rot, the seed will grow.

By this the rain had ceased, and I went forth
From that Dodona green of oak and beech.
But ere my steps could reach
The hamlet, I beheld along the verge
A flight of fleeing cloudlets that did urge
Unequal speed, as when a herd is driven
By the recurring pulse of shoutings loud.
I saw; but held the omen of no worth.
For by the footway not a darnel stirred,
And still the noon slept on, nor even a bird
Moved the dull air; but, at each silent hand,
Upon the steaming land
The hare lay basking, and the budded wheat
Hung slumberous heads of sleep.
Then I was 'ware that a great northern cloud
Moved slowly to the centre of the heaven.
His white head was so high
That the great blue fell round him like the wide
And ermined robe of kings. He sat in pride
Lonely and cold; but methought when he spied
From that severe inhospitable height
The distant dear delight,
The meiting world with summer at her side,
His pale brow mellowed with a mournful light,
And like a marble god he wept his stony tears.
The loyal clouds that sit about his feet,
All in their courtier kinds,
Do weep to see him weep.

After the priceless drops the sycophant winds
Leap headlong down, and chase, and swirl, and sweep
Beneath the royal grief that scarce may reach the ground.
To see their whirling zeal,
Unlikely things that in the kennel lie
Begin to wheel and wheel;
The wild tarantula-will spreads far and nigh,
And spinning straws go spiral to the sky,
And leaves long dead leap up and dance their ghastly round.
And so it happened in the street
'Neath a broad eave I stood and mused again,
And all the arrows of the driving rain
Were tipped with slanting sleet.
I mused beneath the straw pent of the bricked
And sodded cot, with damp moss mouldered o'er,
The bristled thatch gleamed with a carcanet,
And from the inner eaves the reeking wet
Dripped; dropping more
And more, as more the sappy roof was sapped,
And wept a mirkier wash that splashed and clapped
The plain-stones, dribbling to the flooded door.
A plopping pool of droppings stood before,
Worn by a weeping age in rock of easy grain.
O'erhead, hard by, a pointed beam o'erlapped,
And from its jewelled tip
The slipping slipping drip
Did whip the fillipped pool whose hopping plashes ticked.'

Let one or thousands loose or bind,
That land's enslaved whose sovran mind
Collides the conscience of mankind.

And free—whoever holds the rood—
Where Might in Right, and Power in Good,
Flow each in each, like life in blood.

The age has broken from his kings!
Stop him! Behold his feet have wings.
Upon his back the hero springs.

Tho' Jack's horse run away with Jack,
Who knows, while Jack keeps on his back,
If Jack rule him or he rule Jack?

Cuckoo takes the mud away!
True the sun doth shine all day;
Cuckoo takes the mud away.

Who sneers at heirloom rank? God knows
Each man that lives, each flower that blows.
There may be lords—and a blue rose.

Even to the sod whereon you prate
This land is ours. Do you debate
How we shall manage our estate?

Norman, War granted you your lease:
The very countersign of Peace
Shows the first Lessor can release.

Therefore altho' you cannot guide,
Be wise; and spare the almighty pride
Of that mild monster that you ride.

If England's head and heart were one,
Where is that good beneath the sun
Her noble hands should leave undone!

Small unit, hast thou hardiness
To bid mankind to battle? Yes.
The worm will rout them, and is less.

The world assaults? Nor fight nor fly.
Stand in some steadfast truth, and eye
The stubborn siege grow old and die.

My army is mankind. My foe
The very meanest truth I know.
Shall I come back a conqueror? No.

Wouldst light? See Phosphor shines confest,
Turn thy broad back upon the west;
Stand firm. The world will do the rest.

Stand firm. Unless thy strength can climb
Yon alp, and from that height sublime
See, ere we see, the advancing time.

Act for to-day? Friend, this 'to-day'
Washed Adam's feet and streams away
Far into yon Eternity.

Build as men steer, by chart and pole;
Care for each stone as each were sole,
Yet lay it conscious of the whole.

Sow with the signs. The wise man heeds
The seasons. Capricornus feeds
Upon the sluggard's winter seeds.

Each enterprise, or small or great,
Hath its own touchhole; watch and wait,
Find that and fire the loaded fate.

Do in few acts whate'er thou dost;
Let thy oe play to his own cost,
Who moves the oftenest errs the most.

Choose arms from Nature's armouries,
Plagues, conflagrations, storms, and seas,
For God is surety for all these.

Our town is threatened by a bear,
We've manned the thresholds far and near,
Fools ! send five men to kill the bear.

Do good to him that hates thee. Good,
Still good. By physic or by food?
By letting or by stanching blood?

Do as thou wouldst be done by. See
What it were well he did to thee,
He pure as thou, thou foul as he.

Lovest thou not Peace? Aye, moralist,
Both Peace and thee. Yet well I wist
They who shut Janus did slay Christ.

IN WAR-TIME.

A PRAYER OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

Lo, this is night. Hast thou, oh sun, refused
Thy countenance, or is thy golden arm
Shortened, or from thy shining place in heaven
Art thou put down and lost? Neither hast thou
Refused thy constant face, nor is thine arm
Shortened, nor from thy principality
Art thou deposed, oh sun. Ours, ours, the sin,
The sorrow. From thy steadfast noon we turned
Into the eastern shade—and this is night.

Yet so revolves the axle of the world,
And by that brief aversion wheels us round
To morn, and rolls us on the larger paths
Of annual duty. Thou observant moon,
That dancest round the seasonable earth
As David round the ark, but half thy ring
In process, yet, complete, the circular whole
Promotes thee, and expedes thy right advance,
And all thy great desire of summer signs.

And thou, oh sun, our centre, who thyself
Art satellite, and, conscious of the far
Archelion, in obedience of free will
And native duty, as the good man walks
Among the children's faces, with thine house
About thee, least and greatest, first and last,
Makest of the blue eternal holiday
Thy glad perambulation ; and thou, far
Archelion, feudatory still, of one
Not sovran nor in fee of paramount power ;
Moons round your worlds, worlds round your suns, suns round
Such satraps as in orderly degree
Confess a lordlier regent and pervade
A vaster cycle—ye, so moved, commoved,
Revolving and convolving, turn the heavens
Upon the pivot of that summery star,
Centre of all we know : and thou, oh star,
Centre of all we know, chief crown of crowns,
Who art the one in all, the all in one,
And seest the ordered whole—nought uninvolved
But all involved to one direct result
Of multiform volution—in one pomp,
One power, one tune, one time, upon one path
Move with thee moving, Thou, amid thy host
Marchest—ah whither ?
————————Oh God, before Whom
We marshal thus Thy legioned works to take

The secret of Thy counsel, and array
Congress and progress, and, with multitude
As conquerors and to conquer, in consent
Of universal law, approach Thy bound,
Thine immemorial bound, and at Thy face
Heaven and earth flee away; oh Thou Lord God,
Whether, oh absolute existence, Thou,
The Maker, makest, and this fair we see
Be but the mote and dust of that unseen
Unsought unsearchable; or whether Thou
Whose goings forth are from of old, around
Thy going in mere effluence without care
Breathest creation out into the cold
Beyond Thee, and, within Thine ambient breath,
So walkest everlasting as we walk
The unportioned snows; or whether, meditating
Eternity, self-centred, self-fulfilled,
Self-continent, Thou thinkest and we live,
A little while forgettest and we fade,
Rememberest and we are, and this bright vision
Wherein we move, nay all our total sum
And story, be to Thee as to a man
When in the drop and rising of a lid
Lo the swift rack and fashion of a dream,
No more; oh Thou inscrutable, whose ways
Are not as ours, whose form we know not, voice
Hear not, true work behold not, mystery
Conceive not, who—as thunder shakes the world

And rings a silver bell—hast sometime moved
The tongue of man, but in Thy proper speech
Wearest a human language on a word
As limpets on a rock, who, as Eternal,
Omnipotential, Infinite, Allwise,
In measure of Thine operation hast
No prime or term, in subject as in scheme
No final end, in eidol as in act
Nought but the perfect God; oh Thou Supreme,
Inaudible, Invisible, Unknown,
Thy will be done.

A HERO'S GRAVE.

O'ER our evening fire the smoke is like a pall,
And funeral banners hang about the arches of the hall,
In the gable end I see a catafalque aloof,
And night is drawn up like a curtain to the girders of the roof.

Thou knowest why we silent sit, and why our eyes are dim,
Sing us such proud sorrow as we may hear for him.

Reach me the old harp that hangs between the flags he won,
I will sing what once I heard beside the grave of such a son.

My son, my son,
A father's eyes are looking on thy grave,
Dry eyes that look on this green mound and see
The low weed blossom and the long grass wave,
Without a single tear to them or thee,
My son, my son.

Why should I weep? The grass is grass, the weeds
Are weeds. The emmet hath done thus ere now.
I tear a leaf; the green blood that it bleeds
Is cold. What have I here? Where, where, art thou,
My son, my son?

On which tall trembler shall the old man lean?
Which chill leaf shall lap o'er him when he lies
On that bed where in visions I have seen
Thy filial love? or, when thy father dies,
Tissue a fingered thorn to close his childless eyes?

Aye, where art thou? Men tell me of a fame
Walking the wondering nations; and they say,
When thro' the shouting people thy great name
Goes like a chief upon a battle-day,
They shake the heavens with glory. Well-away!

As some poor hound that thro' thronged street and square
Pursues his loved lost lord, and fond and fast
Seeks what he feels to be but feels not where,
Tracks the dear feet to some closed door at last,
And lies him down and lornest looks doth cast,

So I, thro' all the long tumultuous days,
Tracing thy footstep on the human sands,
O'er the signed deserts and the vocal ways
Pursue thee, faithful, thro' the echoing lands,
Wearing a wandering staff with trembling hands:

Thro' echoing lands that ring with victory,
And answer for the living with the dead,
And give me marble when I ask for bread,
And give me glory when I ask for thee—
It was not glory I nursed on my knee.

And now, one stride behind thee, and too late,
Yet true to all that reason cannot kill,
I stand before the inexorable gate
And see thy latest footstep on the sill,
And know thou canst not come, but watch and wait thee
still.

'Old man!'—Ah, darest thou? yet thy look is kind,
Didst thou, too, love him? 'Thou grey-headed sire,
Seest thou this path which from that grave doth wind
Far thro' those western uplands higher and higher,
Till, like a thread, it burns in the great fire

'Of sunset? The wild sea and desert meet
Eastward by yon unnavigable strand,
Then wherefore hath the flow of human feet
Left this dry runnel of memorial sand
Meandering thro' the summer of the land?

'See where the long immeasurable snake,
Between dim hall and hamlet, tower and shed,
Mountain and mountain, precipice and lake,
Lies forth unfinished to this final head,
This green dead mound of the unfading dead!'

Do they then come to weep thee? Do they kiss
Thy relics? Art thou then as wholly gone
As some old buried saint? My son, my son,
Ah, could I mourn thee so! Such tears were bliss!
'Old man, they do not mourn who weep at graves like
this.'

They do not mourn? What! hath the insolent foe
Found out my child's last bed? Who, who, are they
That come and go about him? I cry, 'Who?'
I am his father—I;—I cry 'Who?' 'Aye,
Gray trembler, I will tell thee who are they.

'The slave who, having grown up strong and stark
To the set season, feels at length he wears
Bonds that will break, and thro' the slavish dark
Shines with the light of liberated years,
And still in chains doth weep a freeman's tears.

'The patriot, while the unebbed force that hurled
His tyrant throbs within his bursting veins,
And, on the ruins of a hundred reigns,
That ancient heaven of brass, so long unfurled,
Falls with a crash of fame that fills the world,
And thro' the clangor lo the unwonted strains
Of peace, and, in the new sweet heavens upcurled,
The sudden incense of a thousand plains.

'Youth whom some mighty flash from heaven hath turned
In his dark highway, and who runs forth, shod
With flame, into the wilderness untrod,
And as he runs his heart of flint is burned,
And in that glass he sees the face of God,
And falls upon his knees—and morn is all abroad.

'Age who hath heard amid his cloistered ground
The cheer of youth, and steps from echoing aisles,
And at a sight the great blood with a bound
Melts his brow's winter, which the free sun smiles
To jewels, and he stands a young man crowned
With glittering years among a young world shouting round.

'Girls that do blush and tremble with delight
On the St. John's eve of their maidenhood ;
When the unsummered woman in her blood
Glows through the Parian maid, and at the sight
The flushing virgin weeps and feels herself too bright.

'He who first feels the world-old destiny,
The shaft of gold that strikes the poet still,
And slowly in its victim melts away,
Who knows his wounds will heal but when they kill,
And drop by vital drop doth bleed his golden ill.

'All whom the everpassing mysteries
Have rapt above the region of our race,
And, blinded by the glory and the grace,
Break from the ecstatic sphere—as he who dies
In darkness, and in heaven's own light doth rise,
Dazed with the untried glory of the place
Looks up and sees some well-remembered face,
And thro' the invulnerable angels flies
To that dear human breast and hides his dazzled eyes.

'All who, like the sun-ripened seed that springs
And bourgeons in the sun, do hold profound
An antenatal stature, which the round
Of the dull continent flesh hath cribbed and wound
Into this kernelled man; but having found
Such soil as grew them, burst in blossomings
Not native here, or, from the hallowed ground,
Tower their slow height, and spread, like sheltering wings,
Those boughs wherein the bird of omen sings
High as the palms of heaven, while to the sound
Lo kingdoms jocund in the sacred bound
Till the world's summer fills her moon, and brings
The final fruit which is the feast and fate of kings.

'And darest thou mourn? Thy bones are left behind,
But where art thou, Anchises? Dost thou see
Him who once bare the slow paternity,
Foot-burnt o'er stony Troy? So, thou, reclined

Goest thro' the falling years. Here, here where we
Two stand, lies deep the flesh thou hast so pined
To clasp, and shalt clasp never. Verily,
Love and the worm are often of one mind!
God save them from election! Pity thee?
True he lifts not thy load, but he hath signed
And at his beck a nation rose up free;
Thy wounds his living love may never bind,
But at the dead man's touch posterity
Is healed. To thee, thou poor, and halt, and blind,
He is a staff no more: but times to be
Lean on his monumental memory
As the moon on a mountain. Thou shalt find
A silent home, a cheerless hearth: but he
Shall be a fire which the enkindling wind,
Blowing for ever from eternity,
Fans till its universal blaze hath shined
The yule of thankful ages. Pity thee?
A son is lost to thine infirmity;
Poor fool, what then? A son thou hast resigned
To give a father to the virtues of mankind.'

IN WAR-TIME.

AN ASPIRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

LORD JESUS, as a little child,
  Upon some high ascension day
  When a great people goes to pay
Allegiance, and the tumult wild

Roars by its thousand streets, and fills
  The billowy nation on the plain,
  As roar into the heaving main
A thousand torrents from the hills,

Caught in the current of the throng
  Is drawn beneath the closing crowd,
  And, drowning in the human flood,
Is whirled in its dark depths along;

And low under the ruthless feet,
  Or high as to the awful knees
  Of giants that he partly sees,
Blinded with fear and faint with heat,

Mindless of all but what doth seem,
And shut out from the upper light,
Maddens within a monstrous night
Of limbs that crush him like a dream;

And when his strength no more can stand,
And while he sinks in his last swound,
Is lifted from the deadly ground,
And led by a resistless hand,

And thro' the opening agony
Goes on and knows not where, beside
The mastery of his guardian guide,
Goes on, and knows not where nor why,

Till, when the sky no more is hid,
Between the rocking heads he sees
A mount that rises by degrees
Above them like a pyramid,

And on the summit of the mount
A vacant throne, and round the throne
Bright-vestured princes, zone by zone,
In circles that he cannot count,

And feels, at length, a slanting way,
And labours by his guardian good
Till forth, as from a lessening wood,
They step into the dazzling day,

And from the mount he sees below
  The marvel of the marshalled plain,
  And what was tumult is a reign,
And, as he climbs, the princes know

His guide, and fall about his feet,
  Before his face the courtiers fall,
  And lo ! it is the Lord of all,
And on his throne he takes his seat ;

And, while strong fears transfix the boy,
  The mighty people far and near
  Throw up upon the eye and ear
The flash and thunder of their joy,

And, round the royal flag-unfurled,
  In sequent love and circling awe
  The legions lead their living law,
And what was Chaos is a World :

So, Lord, Thou seest this mortal me,
  Deep in Titanic days that press
  Incessant from unknown access
To issues that I cannot see.

Caught in the current stern and strong
  I sink beneath the closing crowd,
  And drowning in the awful flood
Am whirled in its dark depths along,

Struggling with shows so thronged and thrust
  On these wide eyes which bruise and burn,
  And flash with half-seen sights, or turn
To that worse darkness thick with dust,

That mindful of but what doth seem,
  And hopeless of the upper light,
  I madden in a monstrous night
Of shapes that crush me like a dream.

Then when my strength no more can stand,
  And while I sink in my last swound,
  Lo ! I am lifted from the ground,
And led by a resistless hand ;

And thro' the opening agony
  Go on and know not where, beside
  The mastery of my guardian guide,
Go on, and know not where or why ;

Nor, tho' I cannot see Thy brow,
  Distrust the hand I feel so dear,
  Nor question how Thou wert so near,
Nor ask Thee whither goest Thou,

Nor whence Thy footsteps first began.
  Whence, Lord, Thou knowest : whither, Lord,
  Thou knowest : how Thou knowest. Oh Word
That can be touched, oh Spoken Man,

Enough, enough, if Thou wilt lead,
  To know Thou knowest: enough to know
  That darkling at Thy side I go,
And this strong hand is Thine indeed.

Yet by that side, unspent, untrod,
  Oh let me, clinging still to Thee,
  Between the swaying wonders see
The throne upon the mount of God.

And—tho' they close before mine eye,
  And all my course is choked and shut—
  Feel Time grow steeper under foot,
And know the final height is nigh.

And as one sees, thro' cambered straits
  Of forests, on his forward way,
  Horizons green of coloured day,
Oh let me thro' the crowding Fates

Behold the light of skies unseen,
  Till on that sudden Capitol
  I step forth to the sight of all
That is, and shall be, and hath been,

And Thou, O King, shalt take Thine own
  Triumphant; and, Thy place fulfilled,
  The flaw of Nature shall be healed,
And joyous round Thy central throne

I see the vocal ages roll,
  And all the human universe
  Like some great symphony rehearse
The order of its perfect whole ;

And seek in vain where once I fell,
  Nor know the anarchy I knew
  In those congenial motions due
Of this great work where all is well,

And smile, with dazzled wisdom dumb,
  —Remembering all I said and sung—
  That man asks more of mortal tongue
Than skill to say, 'Thy kingdom come.'

HOME, WOUNDED.

WHEEL me into the sunshine,
Wheel me into the shadow,
There must be leaves on the woodbine,
Is the king-cup crowned in the meadow?

Wheel me down to the meadow,
Down to the little river,
In sun or in shadow
I shall not dazzle or shiver,
I shall be happy anywhere,
Every breath of the morning air
Makes me throb and quiver.

Stay wherever you will,
By the mount or under the hill,
Or down by the little river:
Stay as long as you please,
Give me only a bud from the trees,
Or a blade of grass in morning dew,
Or a cloudy violet clearing to blue,
I could look on it for ever.

Wheel, wheel thro' the sunshine,
Wheel, wheel thro' the shadow;
There must be odours round the pine,
There must be balm of breathing kine,
Somewhere down in the meadow.
Must I choose? Then anchor me there
Beyond the beckoning poplars, where
The larch is snooding her flowery hair
With wreaths of morning shadow.

Among the thicket hazels of the brake
Perchance some nightingale doth shake
His feathers, and the air is full of song;
In those old days when I was young and strong,
He used to sing on yonder garden tree,
Beside the nursery.
Ah, I remember how I loved to wake,
And find him singing on the self-same bough
(I know it even now)
Where, since the flit of bat,
In ceaseless voice he sat,
Trying the spring night over, like a tune,
Beneath the vernal moon;
And while I listed long,
Day rose, and still he sang,
And all his stanchless song,
As something falling unaware,
Fell out of the tall trees he sang among,

Fell ringing down the ringing morn, and rang—
Rang like a golden jewel down a golden stair.

Is it too early? I hope not.
But wheel me to the ancient oak,
On this side of the meadow;
Let me hear the raven's croak
Loosened to an amorous note
In the hollow shadow.
Let me see the winter snake
Thawing all his frozen rings
On the bank where the wren sings.
Let me hear the little bell,
Where the red-wing, top-mast high,
Looks toward the northern sky,
And jangles his farewell.
Let us rest by the ancient oak,
And see his net of shadow,
His net of barren shadow,
Like those wrestlers' nets of old,
Hold the winter dead and cold,
Hoary winter, white and cold,
While all is green in the meadow.

And when you 've rested, brother mine,
Take me over the meadow;
Take me along the level crown
Of the bare and silent down,

And stop by the ruined tower.
On its green scarp, by and by,
I shall smell the flowering thyme,
On its wall the wall-flower.

In the tower there used to be
A solitary tree.
Take me there, for the dear sake
Of those old days wherein I loved to lie
And pull the melilote,
And look across the valley to the sky,
And hear the joy that filled the warm wide hour
Bubble from the thrush's throat,
As into a shining mere
Rills some rillet trebling clear,
And speaks the silent silver of the lake.
There mid cloistering tree-roots, year by year,
The hen-thrush sat, and he, her lief and dear,
Among the boughs did make
A ceaseless music of her married time,
And all the ancient stones grew sweet to hear,
And answered him in the unspoken rhyme
Of gracious forms most musical
That tremble on the wall
And trim its age with airy fantasies
That flicker in the sun, and hardly seem
As if to be beheld were all,
And only to our eyes

They rise and fall,
And fall and rise,
Sink down like silence, or a-sudden stream
As wind-blown on the wind as streams a wedding-chime.

But you are wheeling me while I dream,
And we 've almost reached the meadow!
You may wheel me fast thro' the sunshine,
You may wheel me fast thro' the shadow,
But wheel me slowly, brother mine,
Thro' the green of the sappy meadow;
For the sun, these days have been so fine,
Must have touched it over with celandine,
And the southern hawthorn, I divine,
Sheds a muffled shadow.

There blows
The first primrose,
Under the bare bank roses:
There is but one,
And the bank is brown,
But soon the children will come down,
The ringing children come singing down,
To pick their Easter posies,
And they 'll spy it out, my beautiful,
Among the bare brier-roses;
And when I sit here again alone,
The bare brown bank will be blind and dull,

Alas for Easter posies!
But when the din is over and gone,
Like an eye that opens after pain,
I shall see my pale flower shining again;
Like a fair star after a gust of rain
I shall see my pale flower shining again:
Like a glow-worm after the rolling wain
Hath shaken darkness down the lane
I shall see my pale flower shining again;
And it will blow here for two months more,
And it will blow here again next year,
And the year past that, and the year beyond
And thro' all the years till my years are o'er
I shall always find it here.
Shining across from the bank above,
Shining up from the pond below,
Ere a water-fly wimple the silent pond,
Or the first green weed appear.
And I shall sit here under the tree,
And as each slow bud uncloses,
I shall see it brighten and brighten to me,
From among the leafing brier-roses,
The leaning leafing roses,
As at eve the leafing shadows grow,
And the star of light and love
Draweth near o'er her airy glades,
Draweth near thro' her heavenly shades,
As a maid thro' a myrtle grove.

And the flowers will multiply,
As the stars come blossoming over the sky,
The bank will blossom, the waters blow,
Till the singing children hitherward hie
To gather May-day posies;
And the bank will be bare wherever they go,
As dawn, the primrose-girl, goes by,
And alas for heaven's primroses!

Blare the trumpet, and boom the gun,
But, oh, to sit here thus in the sun,
To sit here, feeling my work is done,
While the sands of life so golden run,
And I watch the children's posies,
And my idle heart is whispering
'Bring whatever the years may bring,
The flowers will blossom, the birds will sing,
And there'll always be primroses.'

Looking before me here in the sun,
I see the Aprils one after one,
Primrosed Aprils one by one,
Primrosed Aprils on and on,
Till the floating prospect closes
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,
And perhaps are gleams of Paradise,
And perhaps—too far for mortal eyes—
New years of fresh primroses,
Years of earth's primroses,

Springs to be, and springs for me
Of distant dim primroses.

My soul lies out like a basking hound,
A hound that dreams and dozes;
Along my life my length I lay,
I fill to-morrow and yesterday,
I am warm with the suns that have long since set,
I am warm with the summers that are not yet,
And like one who dreams and dozes
Softly afloat on a sunny sea,
Two worlds are whispering over me,
And there blows a wind of roses
From the backward shore to the shore before,
From the shore before to the backward shore,
And like two clouds that meet and pour
Each thro' each, till core in core
A single self reposes,
The nevermore with the evermore
Above me mingles and closes;
As my soul lies out like the basking hound,
And wherever it lies seems happy ground,
And when, awakened by some sweet sound,
A dreamy eye uncloses,
I see a blooming world around,
And I lie amid primroses—
Years of sweet primroses,
Springs of fresh primroses,

Springs to be, and springs for me
Of distant dim primroses.

Oh to lie a-dream, a-dream,
To feel I may dream and to know you deem
My work is done for ever,
And the palpitating fever
That gains and loses, loses and gains,
And beats the hurrying blood on the brunt of a thousand pains
Cooled at once by that blood-let
Upon the parapet;
And all the tedious taskèd toil of the difficult long endeavour
Solved and quit by no more fine
Than these limbs of mine,
Spanned and measured once for all
By that right hand I lost,
Bought up at so light a cost
As one bloody fall
On the soldier's bed,
And three days on the ruined wall
Among the thirstless dead.
Oh to think my name is crost
From duty's muster-roll;
That I may slumber tho' the clarion call,
And live the joy of an embodied soul
Free as a liberated ghost.

Oh to feel a life of deed
Was emptied out to feed
That fire of pain that burned so brief a while—
That fire from which I come, as the dead come
Forth from the irreparable tomb,
Or as a martyr on his funeral pile
Heaps up the burdens other men do bear
Thro' years of segregated care,
And takes the total load
Upon his shoulders broad,
And steps from earth to God.

Oh to think, thro' good or ill,
Whatever I am you'll love me still;
Oh to think, tho' dull I be,
You that are so grand and free,
You that are so bright and gay,
Will pause to hear me when I will,
As tho' my head were gray;
And tho' there's little I can say,
Each will look kind with honour while he hears.
And to your loving ears
My thoughts will halt with honourable scars,
And when my dark voice stumbles with the weight
Of what it doth relate
(Like that blind comrade—blinded in the wars—
Who bore the one-eyed brother that was lame),
You'll remember 'tis the same

That cried 'Follow me,'
Upon a summer's day ;
And I shall understand with unshed tears
This great reverence that I see,
And bless the day—and Thee,
Lord God of victory !

And she,
Perhaps oh even she
May look as she looked when I knew her
In those old days of childish sooth,
Ere my boyhood dared to woo her.
I will not seek nor sue her,
For I'm neither fonder nor truer
Than when she slighted my love-lorn youth,
My giftless, graceless, guinealess truth,
And I only lived to rue her.
But I'll never love another,
And, in spite of her lovers and lands,
She shall love me yet, my brother !
As a child that holds by his mother,
While his mother speaks his praises,
Holds with eager hands,
And ruddy and silent stands
In the ruddy and silent daisies,
And hears her bless her boy,
And lifts a wondering joy,

So I'll not seek nor sue her,
But I'll leave my glory to woo her,
And I'll stand like a child beside,
And from behind the purple pride
I'll lift my eyes unto her,
And I shall not be denied.
And you will love her, brother dear,
And perhaps next year you'll bring me here
All thro' the balmy April-tide,
And she will trip like spring by my side,
And be all the birds to my ear.
And here all three we'll sit in the sun,
And see the Aprils one by one,
Primrosed Aprils on and on,
Till the floating prospect closes
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,
And perhaps, are gleams of Paradise,
And perhaps, too far for mortal eyes,
New springs of fresh primroses,
Springs of earth's primroses,
Springs to be and springs for me,
Of distant dim primroses.

A NUPTIAL EVE.

Oh, happy, happy maid,
In the year of war and death
She wears no sorrow!
By her face so young and fair,
By the happy wreath
That rules her happy hair,
She might be a bride to-morrow!
She sits and sings within her moonlit bower,
Her moonlit bower in rosy June,
Yet ah, her bridal breath,
Like fragrance from some sweet night-blowing flower,
Moves from her moving lips in many a mournful tune!
She sings no song of love's despair,
She sings no lover lowly laid,
No fond peculiar grief
Has ever touched or bud or leaf
Of her unblighted spring.
She sings because she needs must sing;
She sings the sorrow of the air
Whereof her voice is made.
That night in Britain howsoe'er
On any chords the fingers strayed
They gave the notes of care.

A dim sad legend old
Long since in some pale shade
Of some far twilight told,
She knows not when or where,
She sings, with trembling hand on trembling lute-strings laid :—

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
'Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!'

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And thro' the silver meads;

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode thro' the Monday morn,

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine!
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger ! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood—
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear ?
The ancient stile is not alone,
Tis not the burn I hear !

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

THE MOTHER'S LESSON.

Come hither an' sit on my knee, Willie,
Come hither an' sit on my knee,
An' list while I tell how your brave brither fell,
Fechtin' for you an' for me:
Fechtin' for you an' for me, Willie,
Wi' his guid sword in his han'.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

Ye min' o' your ain brither dear, Willie,
Ye min' o' your ain brither dear,
How he pettled ye aye wi' his pliskies an' play,
An' was aye sae cantie o' cheer:
Aye sae cantie o' cheer, Willie,
As he steppit sae tall an' sae gran',
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

D' ye min' when the bull had ye doun, Willie,
D' ye min' when the bull had ye doun?

D' ye min' wha grippit ye fra the big bull,
D' ye min' o' his muckle red woun'?
D' ye min' o' his muckle red woun', Willie,
D' ye min' how the bluid doun ran?
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

D' ye min' when we a' wanted bread, Willie,
The year when we a' wanted bread?
How he smiled when he saw the het parritch an' a',
An' gaed cauld an' toom to his bed:
Gaed awa' toom to his bed, Willie,
For the love o' wee Willie an' Nan?
Hech, but ye' ll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man!

Next simmer was bright but an' ben, Willie,
Next simmer was bright but an' ben,
When there cam a gran' cry like a win' strang an' high
By loch, an' mountain, an' glen:
By loch, an' mountain, an' glen, Willie,
The cry o' a far forrin lan',
An' up loupit ilka brave man, Willie,
Up loupit ilka brave man.

For the voice cam saying, 'Wha 'll gang?' Willie,
The voice cam saying, 'Wha 'll gang
To fecht owre the sea that the slave may be free,
An' the weak be safe fra' the strang?'

The weak be safe fra' the strang, Willie;
Rab looked on Willie an' Nan,
An' hech, but he was a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but he was a brave man!

I kent by his een he was gaun, Willie,
I kent by his een he was gaun,
An' he rose like a chief: twice we spak in our grief–
'Dinna gang!' 'My mither, I maun!'
When he said, 'My mither, I maun,' Willie,
I gied him his sword to his han'.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

An' sae it happened afar, Willie,
Sae it happened afar,
In the dead midnight there rose a great fecht,
An' Rab was first i' the war:
First i' the haur o' the war, Willie,
Wi' his guid sword in his han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

An' there cam' a dark wicked lord, Willie,
There cam' a dark wicked lord,
An' oh my guid God! on my bauld bairn he rode,
An' smote him wi' his sword:

Smote him wi' his sword, Willie,
But Rab had his guid sword in han'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man!

He rushed on the fae in his might, Willie,
In his might to the fecht thro' the night,
An' he grippit him grim, an' the fae grippit him,
An' they rolled owre i' the fecht:
They rolled owre i' the fecht, Willie,
Rab wi' his guid sword in han'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man!

When the gran' stowre cleared awa', Willie,
When the gran' stowre cleared awa',
An' the mornin' drew near in chitter an' in fear,
Still, still, in death they lay twa:
Still, still, in death they lay twa, Willie,
Rab wi' his guid sword in han'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Then up fra the death-sod they bore him, Willie,
The young men an' maidens they bore him,
An' they mak the rocks ring 'gin my bairn were a king,
An' a' the sweet lassies greet owre him:

A' the sweet lassies greet owre him, Willie,
An' their proud lips kiss his cauld han',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' they big him a green grass grave, Willie,
They big him a green grass grave,
My ain lad! my ain! an' they write on the stane,
'Wha wad na sleep wi' the brave?'
An' wha wad na sleep wi' the brave, Willie?
Wha wad na dee for his lan'?
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

Noo come to yon press wi' me, Willie,
Come to yon press wi' me,
And I'll show ye somethin' o' auld lang syne,
When he was a bairnie like thee:
When he was a bairnie like thee, Willie,
And stood at my knee where ye stan',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye see this wee bit bannet, Willie,
—I min' weel the day it was new—
See how I haud it here to my heart,
His wee bit bannet o' blue:

His wee bit bannet o' blue, Willie,
Wi' its wee bit cockie an' ban'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D' ye see his ba' and his stickie, Willie,
When he played at the ba';
Na, na, ye're no to tak it in han',
Ye're no sae brave an' sae braw!
But gin ye grow braw an' brave, Willie,
Aiblins I'se gie't to your han',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' this was his Guid Buik, Willie,
The Guid Buik that he lo'ed,
Where he read the Word o' the great guid Lord
Wha bought us wi' His bluid.
An' will we spare our bluid, Willie,
To buy the dear auld lan'?
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

They say he's dead an' gane, Willie,
They say he's dead and gane.
Wad God my bairnies a' were sons,
That ten might gang for ane:

Ten might gang for ane, Willie,
To save the dear auld lan'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

I 'd no be lorn an' lane, Willie,
I 'd no be lorn an' lane,
For gin I had him here by the han'
He could na be mair my ain :
He 'd no be mair my ain, Willie,
Gin I grippit him by the han'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

An' oh! gin ye gang fra me, Willie,
Gin ye gang as he gaed fra me,
Ye 'll aye be still as near to my heart
As the noo when ye sit on my knee :
As the noo when ye sit on my knee, Willie,
An' I haud ye by the han'.
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

'An' wad ye no greet at a', mither?
Wad ye no greet at a'?'
Aye, wad I greet my bonnie bonnie bairn!
An' will ye no greet when I fa'?'

Will I no greet when ye fa', Willie?
God bless your bonnie wee han'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
I kent weel ye 'd be a brave man!

Aye, will I greet day an' night, Willie,
Aye, will I greet day an' night!
But gin ye can see fra your heaven doun to me,
Ye 'se no be wae at the sight:
Ye 'se no be wae at the sight, Willie,
E'en in your bright blessed lan'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
I kent weel ye 'd be a brave man.

Ye ken how I greet sae sair, Willie,
Ye ken how I greet sae sair,
When ye 're no my ain guid bairnie the day,
An' my een are cloudy wi' care:
My een are cloudy wi' care, Willie,
An' I lean doun my head on my han',
An' think 'Will ye be a guid man, Willie,
Ah, will ye grow a guid man?'

Ye ken when I did na greet sae, Willie,
Ye ken when I did na greet sae!
Gran' gran' are a proud mither's tears,
An' the gate that she gangs in her wae:

The gate that she gangs in her wae, Willie,
Wi' her foot on her ain proud lan'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Ye min' how ye saw me greet, Willie,
Ye min' how ye saw me greet,
When the great news cam' to the toun at e'en,
An' we heard the shout in the street:
We heard the shout in the street, Willie,
An' the death-word it rode an' it ran.
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Ye min' how I lift up mine ee', Willie,
Ye min' how I lift up mine ee',
An' smiled as I smile when I stan' i' the door,
An see ye come toddlin' to me:
See ye come toddlin' to me, Willie,
An' smile afar off where I stan'.
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Thank God for ilk tear I let fa', Willie,
Thank God for ilk tear I let fa',
For oh, where they wipe awa' tears fra' a' een,
Sic tears they wad no wipe awa':

Sic tears they wad no wipe awa', Willie,
Tho' there 's nane may be sad i' that lan'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Noo to your play ye maun gang, Willie,
Noo to your play ye maun gang,
An' belyve, my ain wee, ye 'll come back to my knee,
And I 'se sing ye an auld Scots sang:
I 'se sing ye an auld Scots sang, Willie,
A sang o' the dear auld lan'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man. Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

An' aye d' ye min' what I say, Willie,
What ye heard your auld mither say,
Better to dee a brave man an' free,
Than to live a fause coward for aye:
Than to live a fause coward for aye, Willie,
An' stan' by the shame o' your lan'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

It 's brave to be first at the schule,
It 's brave to be cock o' the class,
It 's brave to thwack a strang fule,
It 's brave to win a wee lass,

It 's brave to be first wi' the pleugh,
An' first i' the reel an' strathspey,
An' first at the tod i' the cleugh,
An' first at the stag at bay.

It 's brave to be laird o' the glen,
It 's brave to be chief o' the clan,
But he that can dree for his neebor to dee,
Oh, he 's the true brave man:
He 's the true brave man, Willie,
An' the fame o' his name sall be gran'!
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

ALONE.

THERE came to me softly a small wind from the sea,
And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.
But I sang sorrow and ho the heavy day!
And I sang heigho and well-away!

Again there came softly a small wind from the sea,
And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.
And still I sang sorrow and ho the heavy day!
And I sang heigho and well-away!

Once more there came softly that small wind from the sea,
And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.
I hushed my song of sorrow and ho the heavy day,
And I hushed my heigho and well-away.

Then, when I was silent, that small wind from the sea,
It came the fourth time tenderly to me;
To me, to me,
Sitting by the sea,
Sitting sad and solitary thinking of thee.
Like warm lips it touched me—that soft wind from the sea,
And I trembled and wept as it passed by me.

FAREWELL.

HEAR me, hear me, now!
By this heaven less pure than thou,
Fare thee well!
By this living light
Less bright,
Fare thee well!

By the boundless sea
Of mine agony,
Fare thee well!
That unfathomed sea
Which must roll from me to thee,
Must roll from thee to me,
Fare thee well!

By the tears that I have bled for thee,
Farewell!
By the life's-blood I will shed for thee,
Farewell!
By that field of death and fear
Where I 'll fight with sword and spear
The fight I 'm fighting here,
Fare thee well!

By a form amid the storm,
Fare thee well!
By a sigh above the cry,
Fare thee well!

By the war-cloud and the shout
That shall wrap me round about,
But can never shut thee out,
Fare thee well!

By the wild and bloody close,
When I loose this hell of woes,
And these fires shall eat our foes,
Fare thee well!

By all thou 'lt not forget,
Fare thee well!
By the joy when first we met,
Fare thee well!

By the mighty love and pain
Of the frantic arms that strain
What they ne'er shall clasp again
Fare thee well!

By the bliss of our first kiss,
Fare thee well!

By the locked love of our last,
Till a passion like a blast
Tore the future from the past,
Fare thee well!

By the nights that I shall weep for thee,
Farewell!
By the vigils I shall keep for thee,
Farewell!
By the memories that will beam of thee,
Farewell!
By the dreams that I shall dream of thee,
Farewell!
By the passion when I wake
Of this heart that will not break,
That can bleed but cannot break,
Fare thee well!

By that holier woe of thine,
Fare thee well!
By thy love more pure than mine,
Fare thee well!

By the days thou shalt hold dear for me,
The lone life thou shalt bear for me,
The grey hairs thou shalt wear for me,
Farewell!

By thy good deeds offered up for me,
Farewell!
When thou fillest the wanderer's cup for me,
Farewell!
When thou givest the hungry bread for me,
Farewell!
When thou watchest by the dead for me,
Farewell!

By the faith of thy pure eyes,
By the hopes that shall arise
Day and night to the deaf skies,
Fare thee well!

By that faith I cannot share,
Fare thee well!
By this hopeless heart's despair,
Fare thee well!

By the days I have been glad for thee,
The years I shall be sad for thee,
The hours I shall be mad for thee,
Farewell!

SLEEPING AND WAKING.

I HAD a dream—I lay upon thy breast,
In that sweet place where we lay long ago:
I thought the morning woodbine to and fro
With playful shadows whipped away my rest,
And in my sleep I cried to thee, too blest,

'Rise, oh my love, the morning sun is bright,
Let us arise, oh love, let us arise;
The flowers awake, the lark is in the skies,
I will array myself in my delight,
And we will—' and I woke to death and night!

HE LOVES AND HE RIDES AWAY.'

'T WAS in that island summer where
They spin the morning gossamer,
And weave the evening mist,
That, underneath the hawthorn-tree,
I loved my love, and my love loved me,
And there we lay and kissed,
And saw the happy ships upon the yielding sea.

Soft my heart, and warm his wooing,
What we did seemed, while 'twas doing,
Beautiful and wise ;
Wiser, fairer, more in tune,
Than all else in that sweet June,
And sinless as the skies
That warmed the willing earth thro' all the languid noon.

Ah that fatal spell !
Ere the evening fell
I fled away to hide my frightened face,

And cried that I was born,
And sobbed with love and scorn,
And in the darkness sought a darker place,
And blushed, and wept, and blushed, and dared not think
of morn.

Day and night, day and night,
And I saw no light,
Night and day, night and day,
And in my woe I lay
And dreamed the dreams they dream who cannot sleep:
My speech was withered, and I could not pray;
My tears were frozen, and I could not weep.

I saw the hawthorn rise
Between me and the skies,
I felt the shadow was from pole to pole,
I felt the leaves were shed,
I felt the birds were dead,
And on the earth I snowed the winter of my soul.

Like to the hare wide eyed,
That with her throbbing side
Pressed to the rock awaits the coming cry.
In my despair I sate
And waited for my fate;
And as the hunted hare returns to die,
And with her latest breath
Regains her native heath,

So, when I heard the feet of destiny
Near and more near, and caught the yelp of death,
Toward the sounding sea,
Toward my hawthorn-tree,
Under the ignorant stars I darkly crept:
'There,' I said, 'they'll find me dead,
Lying within my maidenhead.'
And at my own unwonted voice, I wept;
And for my great heart-ache,
Within a little brake
I lay me weary down and weary slept,
Nor ever oped mine eyes till morn had left the lake.

Her morning bath was o'er,
And on the golden shore
She stood like Flora with her floral train,
And all her track was seen
Among the watery sheen,
That blushed, and wished, and blushing wished again,
And parted still, and closed, with pleasure that had been.

Oh the happy isle,
The universal smile
That met, as love meets love, the smile of day,
And touched and lit delight
Within the common light,
Till all the joy of life was ecstacy,
And morn's wild maids ran each her flowery way,

And shook her dripping locks o'er hill, and dale, and lea!
'At least,' I said, 'my tree is sear and blight,
My tree, my hawthorn-tree!'

With downcast eyes of fear
I drew me near and near,
Dazed with the dewy glory of the hour,
Till under-foot I see
A flower too dear to me:
I pause, and raise my full eyes from the flower,
And lo! my hawthorn-tree!

As a white-limbed may,
In some illumined bay,
Flings round her shining charms in starry rain,
And with her body bright
Dazzles the waters white,
That fall from her fair form, and flee in vain,
Dyed with the dear unutterable sight,
And circle out her beauty thro' the circling main.

So my hawthorn-tree
Stood and seemed to me
The very face that smiled the summer smile:
All lesser light-bearers
Did light their lamps at hers—
She lit her own at heaven's, and looked the while

A purer sweeter sun,
Whence beauty was begun,
And blossomed from her blossoms thro' the blossoming isle.
Then I took heart, and as I looked upon
Her unstained white, I said, 'I am not wholly vile.'

Thus my hawthorn-tree
Was my witness unto me,
And so I answered my impleading sin
Till blossom-time was o'er,
And with the autumn roar
Mine unrebuked accuser entered in,
And I fell down convinced, and strove with shame no more.

Some time after came to me,
An image of the hawthorn-tree,
And bore the old sweet witness ; and I heard,
And from among the dead
I lifted up my head,
As one lifts up to hear a little bird,
And finds the night is past and all the east is red.

Small and fair, choice and rare,
Snowy pale with moonlight hair,
My little one blossoms and springs!

Like joy with woe singing to it,
Like love with sorrow to woo it,
So my witty one so my pretty one sings!
And I see the white hawthorn-tree and the bright summer
bird singing thro' it,
And my heart is prouder than kings!

While I look on her I seem
Once again in the sweet dream
Of that enchanted day,
When, underneath the hawthorn-tree,
I loved my love and my love loved me:
And lost in love we lay,
And saw the happy ships upon the yielding sea.

While I look on her I seem
Once again in that bright dream,
Beautiful and wise:
Wiser, fairer, more in tune,
Than all else in that sweet June,
And sinless as the skies
That warmed the willing earth thro' all the languid noon.

Like my hawthorn-tree,
She stands and seems to me
The very face that smiles the summer smile:
All lesser light-bearers
Do light their lamps at hers—
She lights her own at heaven's, and looks the while

A sweeter purer sun,
Whence beauty is begun,
To blossom from that blossom thro' the blossoming isle.

Thou shalt not leave me, child!
Come weather fierce or mild,
My babe, my blossom! thou shalt never leave me!
Life shall never wean us,
Nor death shall e'er have room to come between us,
And time may grieve me but shall ne'er bereave me,
Nor see us more apart than he hath seen us.

For I will fall with thee,
As a bird from the tree
Falls with a butterfly petal whitely shed,
And falling—thou and I—
I shall not dread to die,
But like a child I'll take my flower to bed.
And when the long cold death-night hath gone by,
In the great darkness of the sepulchre
I 'll feel and find thee near,
My babe, my white white blossom!
And when the trumpet cries,
I shall not fear to rise,
But wear thee o'er the spot upon my bosom,
And come out of my grave and bear the awful eyes.

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

I DO not say the day is long and weary,
For while thou art content to be away,
Living in thee, oh Love, I live thy day,
And reck not if mine own be sad and dreary.

I do not count its sorrows or its charms:
It lies as cold, as empty, and as dead,
As lay my wedding-dress beside my bed
When I was clothed in thy dear arms.

Yet there is something here within this breast
Which, like a flower that never blossoms, lieth;
And tho' in words and tears my sorrow crieth,
I know that it hath never been exprest.

Something that blindly yearneth to be known,
And doth not burn, nor rage, nor leap, nor dart;
But struggles in the sickness of my heart,
As a root struggles in a vault of stone.

Now, by my wedding-ring,
I charge thee do not move

That heavy stone that on the vault doth lie;
I charge thee be of merry cheer, my love,
Nor ever let me know that thou dost sigh,
For, ah! how light a thing
Would shake me with the sorrow I deny!

I am as one who hid a giant's child
In her deep prison, and, from year to year,
He grew to his own stature, fierce and wild,
And what she took for love she kept for fear.

Oh, thou enchanter, who dost hold the spells
Of all my sealèd cells,
Oh Love, that hast been silent all too long,
A little longer, Love, oh, silent be;
My secret hath waxed strong,
My giant hath grown up to angry age;
Do thou but say the word that sets him free,
And, lo! he tears me in his rage!

I do not say the day is sad and dreary,
For while thou art content to be away,
Living in thee, oh Love, I live thy day,
And reck not if mine own be wan and weary.

I look down on it from my far love-dream,
As some drowned saint may see with musing eyes
Her lifeless body float adown the stream,
While she is smiling in her skies.

But do thou silence keep!
For I am one who walketh on the ledge
Of some great rock's sheer edge:
I walk in beauty and in light,
Self-balanced on the height:
A breath!—and I am breathless in the deep.

Oh, my own Love, I warn
Thy grief to be as still as they who tread
The snow of alpine peak,
And see the pendulous avalanche o'erhead
Hang like a dew-drop on a thorn!

I charge thee silence keep!
My life stands breathless by her agony,
Oh, do not bid her leap!
I am as calm as air
Before a summer storm;
The ocean of my thoughts hath ceased to roll;
This living heart that doth not beat is warm;
I think the stillness of my face is fair;
The cloud that fills my soul
Is not a cloud of pain.
Beware, beware! one rash
Sweet glance may be the flash
That brings it raving down in thunder and in rain!

No, do not speak:
Nor, oh! let any tell of thy pale cheek,

Nor paint the silent sorrow of thine eye,
Nor tell me thou art fond, or gay, or glad;
For, ah! so tuned and lightly strung am I,
That howsoe'er thou stir, I ring thereby.

Thy manly voice is deep,
But if thou touch from sleep
The woman's treble of my shrill reply,
Ah, who shall say thine echoes may not weep?
A jester's ghost is sad,
The shades of merriest flowers do mow and creep,
And oh, the vocal shadows that should fly
About the simplest word that thou canst say,
What after spell shall ever lay?

Hast thou forgot when I sat down to sing
To my forsaken harp, long, long ago,
How thou, for sport, wouldst strike a single string,
And hark the hovering chorus come and go,
Low and high, high and low,
Till round the throbbing wire
Rose such a quivering quire,
As all King David's wives were echoing
The tenor of their king.

Like those dear strings, my silent soul is full
Of cries, as a ripe fruit is full of wine.
The fruit is hanging fair and beautiful,
And dry-eyed as a rose in the sunshine,

But try it with a single touch of thine,
And, lo! the drops that start,
And all the golden vintage of its heart!

So, thinking of thy debt to Love and me,
In some dull hour beyond the sea,
Do thou but only say—
As carelessly as men do pay their debts—
'Oh, weary day!'
And that one sigh o'ersets
The hive of my regrets,
'Ah, weary, weary day,
Oh, weary, weary day,
Oh, day so weary, oh, day so dreary,
Oh, weary, weary, weary, weary, weary,
Oh, weary, weary!'

GRASS FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD.

SMALL sheaf
Of withered grass, that hast not yet revealed
Thy story, lo! I see thee once more green
And growing on the battle-field,
On that last day that ever thou didst grow!

I look down thro' thy blades and see between
A little lifted clover leaf
Stand like a cresset: and I know
If this were morn there should be seen
In its chalice such a gem
As decks no mortal diadem
Poised with a lapidary skill
Which merely living doth fulfil
And pass the exquisite strain of subtlest human will.
But in the sun it lifteth up
A dry unjewelled cup,
Therefore I see that day doth not begin;
And yet I know its beaming lord
Hath not yet passed the hill of noon,

Or thy lush blades
Would be more dry and thin,
And every blade a thirsty sword
Edged with the sharp desire that soon
Should draw the silver blood of all the shades.
I feel 't is summer. This whereon I stand
Is not a hill, nor, as I think, a vale;
The soil is soft upon the generous land,
Yet not as where the meeting streams take hand
Under the mossy mantle of the dale.
Such grass is for the meadow. If I try
To lift my heavy eyelids, as in dreams
A power is on them, and I know not why.
Thou art but part; the whole is unconfest:
Beholding thee I long to know the rest.
As one expands the bosom with a sigh,
I stretch my sight's horizon; but it seems,
Ere it can widen round the mystery,
To close in swift contraction, like the breast.
The air is held, as by a charm,
In an enforcèd silence, as like sound
As the dead man the living. 'T is so still,
I listen for it loud.
And when I force my eyes from thy sole place
And see a wider space,
Above, around,
In ragged glory like a torn
And golden-natured cloud,

O'er the dim field a living smoke is warm;
As in a city on a sabbath morn
The hot and summer sunshine goes abroad
Swathed in the murky air,
As if a god
Enrobed himself in common flesh and blood,
Our heavy flesh and blood,
And here and there
As unaware
Thro' the dull lagging limbs of mortal make,
That keep unequal time, the swifter essence brake.

But hark a bugle horn!
And, ere it ceases, such a shock
As if the plain were iron, and thereon
An iron hammer, heavy as a hill,
Swung by a monstrous force, in stroke came down
And deafened Heaven. I feel a swound
Of every sense bestunned.
The rent ground seems to rock,
And all the definite vision, in such wise
As a dead giant borne on a swift river,
Seems sliding off for ever,
When my reviving eyes,
As one that holds a spirit by his eye
With set inexorable stare,
Fix thee: and so I catch, as by the hair,
The form of that great dream that else had drifted by.

I know not what that form may be;
The lock I hold is all I see,
And thou, small sheaf! art all the battle-field to me.

The wounded silence hath not time to heal
When see! upon thy sod
The round stroke of a charger's heel
With echoing thunder shod!
As the night-lightning shows
A mole upon a momentary face,
So, as that gnarled hoof strikes the indented place,
I see it, and it goes!
And I hear the squadrons trot thro' the heavy shell and shot,
And wheugh! but the grass is gory!
Forward ho! blow to blow, at the foe in they go,
And 'tis hieover heigho for glory!

The rushing storm is past,
But hark! upon its track the far drums beat,
And all the earth that at thy roots thou hast
Stirs, shakes, shocks, sounds, with quick strong tramp of feet
In time unlike the last.
Footing to tap of drum
The charging columns come;
And as they come their mighty martial sound
Blows on before them as a flaming fire

Blows in the wind; for, as old Mars in ire
Strode o'er the world encompassed in a cloud,
So the swift legion, o'er the quaking ground,
Strode in a noise of battle. Nigh and nigher
I heard it, like the long swell gathering loud
What-time a land-wind blowing from the main
Blows to the burst of fury and is o'er,
As if an ocean on one fatal shore
Fell in a moment whole, and threw its roar
Whole to the further sea: and as the strain
Of my strong sense cracked in the deafened ear,
And all the rushing tumult of the plain
Topped its great arch above me, a swift foot
Was struck between thy blades to the struck root,
And lifted: as into a sheath
A sudden sword is thrust and drawn again
Ere one can gasp a breath.
I was so near,
I saw the wrinkles of the leather grain,
The very cobbler's stitches, and the wear
By which I knew the wearer trod not straight;
An honest shoe it seemed that had been good
To mete the miles of any country lane,
Nor did one sign explain
'T was made to wade thro' blood.
My shoe, soft footstooled on this hearth, so far
From strife, hath such a patch, and as he past
His broken shoelace whipt his eager haste.

An honest shoe, good faith ! that might have stood
Upon the threshold of a village inn
And welcomed all the world : or by the byre
And barn gone peaceful till the day closed in,
And, scraped at eve upon some homely gate,
Ah, Heaven ! might sit beside a cottage fire
And touch the lazy log to softer flames than war.

Long, long, thou wert alone,
I thought thy days were done,
Flat as ignoble grass that lies out mown
By peaceful hands in June, I saw thee lie.
A worm crawled o'er thee, and the gossamer
That telegraphs Queen Mab to Oberon,
Lengthening his living message, passed thee by.
But rain fell : and thy strawed blades one by one
Began to stir and stir.

And as some moorland bird
Whom the still hunter's stalking steps have stirred,
When he stands mute, and nothing more is heard,
With slow succession and reluctant art
Grows upward from her bed,
Each move a muffled start,
And thro' the silent autumn covert red
Uplifts a throbbing head
That times the ambushed hunter's thudding heart ;

Or as a snow-drop bending low
Beneath a flake of other snow
Thaws to its height when spring winds melt the skies,
And drip by drip doth mete a measured rise ;

Or as the eyelids of a child's fair eyes
Lift from her lower lashes slow and pale
To arch the wonder of a fairy tale ;
So thro' the western light
I saw thee slowly rearing to thy height.

Then when thou hadst regained thy state,
And while a meadow-spider with three lines
Enschemed thy three tall pillars green,
And made the enchanted air between
Mortal with shining signs,
(For the loud carrion-flies were many and late),

Betwixt thy blades and stems
There fell a hand,
Soft, small and white, and ringed with gold and gems ;
And on those stones of price
I saw a proud device,
And words I could not understand.

Idly, one by one,
The knots of anguish came undone,
The fingers stretched as from a cramp of woe,
And sweet and slow

Moved to gracious shapes of rest,
Like a curl of soft pale hair
Drying in the sun.
And then they spread,
And sought a wonted greeting in the air,
And strayed
Between thy blades, and with each blade
As with meeting fingers played
And tresses long and fair.
Then again at placid length it lay,
Stretched as to kisses of accustomed lips;
And again in sudden strain
Sprang, falling clenched with pain,
Till the knuckles white,
Thro' the evening gray,
Whitened and whitened as the snowy tips
Of far hills glimmer thro' the night.
But who shall tell that agony
That beat thee, beat thee into bloody clay
Red as the sards and rubies of the rings;
As when a bird, fast by the fowler's net,
A moment doth forget
His fetters, and with desperate wings
A-sudden springs and falls,
And (while from happy clouds the skylark calls)
Still feebler springs
And fainter falls,

And still untamed upon the gory ground
With failing strength renews his deadly wound?
At length the struggle ceased; and my fixed eye
Perceived that every finger wan
Did quiver like the quivering fan
Of a dying butterfly,
Nor long I watched until
Even the humming in the air was still.
Then I gazed and gazed,
Nor once my aching eyeballs raised
Till a poor bird that had a meadow nest
Came down, and like a shadow ran
Among the shadowy grass.
I followed with mine eyes; and with a strain
Pursued her, till six cubits' length beyond
Thy central sheaf, I found
A sight I could not pass.
The hacked and haggard head
Of a huge war-horse dead.
The evening haze hung o'er him like a breath,
And still in death
He stretched drawn lips of rage that grinned in vain;
A sparrow chirped upon
His wound, and in his dying slaver fed,
Or picked those teeth of stone
That bit with lifeless jaws the purple tongue of pain.

But I remembered that dead hand

I left to trace the childless lark,
And back o'er those six cubits of grass-land,
Blade by blade, and stalk by stalk,
As one doth walk
Who, mindful, counts by dark
Along the garden palings to the gate,
I felt along the vision to where late
There lay that dead hand white;
But now methought that there was something more
Than when I looked before,
And what was more was sweeter than the rest;
As when upon the moony half of night
Aurora lays a living light,
Softer than moonshine, yet more bright.
And as I looked I was aware
Another hand was on the hand,
A smaller hand, more fair
But not more white, as is the warm delight
That curves and curls and coyly glows
About the blushing heart of the white rose
More fair but not more white
Than those broad beauties that expand
And fall, and falling blanch the morning air.

Both hands lay motionless,
The living on the dead. But by and by
The living hand began to move and press

The cold dead flesh, and took its silent way
So often o'er the unrespective clay,
In such long-drawn caress
Of pleading passion, such an ecstacy
Of supplicating touch, that as they lay
So like, so unlike, twined with the fond art
And all the dear delay
And dreadful patience of a desperate heart,
Methought that to the tenement
From which it lately went,
The naked life had come back, and did try
By every gate to enter. While I thought,
With sudden clutch of new intent
The living grasp had caught
The dead compliance. Slowly thro'
The dusky air she raised it, and aloft,
While all her fingers soft
And every starting vein
Tightened as in a rack of pain,
Held it one straining moment fixed and mute,
And let it go.
And with a thud upon the sod,
It fell like falling fruit.

Then there came a cry,
Tearless, bloodless, dry
Of every sap of sorrow but its own—
It had no likeness among living cries;

And to my heart my streaming blood was blown
As if before my eyes
A dead man sprang up dead, and dead fell down.
The carrion-hunting winds that prowl the wold,
Frenzied for prey, sweep in and bear it on,
Far, far and further thro' the shrieking cold,
And still the yelling pack devour it as they run.
And silence, like a want of air,
Was round me, and my sense burned low,
And darkness darkened ; and the glow
Of the living hand being gone,
The dead hand showed like a pale stone
Full fathom five
Under a quiet bay.
But still my sight did dive
To reach it where it lay,
And still the night grew dark, and by degrees
The dead thing glimmered with a drownèd light,
As faces seem and sink in depths of darkening seas.
Then, while yet
My set eyes saw it, as the sage doth set
His glass to some dim glimpse afar
That palpitates from mote to star,
It was touched and hid ;
Touched and hid, as when a deep sea-weed
Hides some white sea-sorrow. All
My sight uprose, and all my soul
(As one who presses at the pane

When a city show goes by),
Crowded into the fixed eye,
And filled the starting ball.
Nor filled in vain.
I began to feel
The air had something to reveal.
Beyond the blank indifference
Was underlined another sense,
Was rained a gracious influence ;
And tho' the darkness was so deep,
I knew it was not wholly dead,
Nor empty, as we feel in sleep
That some one standeth by the bed.
I beheld, as who should look
In trance upon a sealèd book.
I perceived that in a place
The night was lighter, as the face
Of an Indian Queen when love
Draws back the dark blood from her sick
Pale cheek
Behind the sable curtain that doth not move.

No outer light was shed,
But as the mystery
Before my stronger will did slowly yield,
I saw, as in that dark hour before morn
When the shocks of harvest corn
Exhale about the midnight field

The wealth of yellow suns, and breathe a gentle day.
I saw the shape of a fair bended head,
And hair pale streaming long and low
Veiling the face I might not know,
And dabbling all the ground with sweet uncertain woe.
Much I questioned in my mind
Of her form and kind,
But my stern compelling eye
Brought no other answer from the air,
Nor did my rude hand dare
Profane that agony.
I watched apart
With such a sweet awe in my heart
As looks up dumb into the sky
When that goddess, lorn and lone,
Who slew grim winter like a polar bear,
And threw his immemorial white
Upon her granite throne,
Sits all unseen as Death,
Save for the loss of many a hidden star
And for the wintry mystery of her breath,
And at a far-sight that she sees,
Bowed by her great despair,
Bendeth her awful head upon her knees,
And all her wondrous hair
Dishevels golden down the northern night.

At length my weary gaze
Rents: and, haze in haze
Pervolving as in glad release,
I saw each separate shade
Slide from his place and fade,
And all the flowering dark did winter back
Into its undistinguished black.
So the sculptor doth in fancy make
His formèd image in the formless stone,
And while his spells compel,
Can see it there full well,
The ivory kernel in the ivory shell,
But shakes himself and all the god is gone.
Alas!
And have I seen thee but an hour?
And shalt thou never tell
Thy story, oh thou broken flower,
Thou midnight asphodel
Among the battle grass?

Too soon! too soon!
But while I bid thee stay,
Night, like a cloud, dissolves into the day,
And from the city clock I hear the stroke of noon.

AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

'TUMBLE and rumble, and grumble and snort,
Like a whale to starboard, a whale to port;
Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort,
And the steamer steams thro' the sea, love!'

'I see the ship on the sea, love,
I stand alone
On this rock,
The sea does not shock
The stone;
The waters around it are swirled,
But under my feet
I feel it go down
To where the hemispheres meet
At the adamant heart of the world.
Oh, that the rock would move!
Oh, that the rock would roll
To meet thee over the sea, love!
Surely my mighty love
Should fill it like a soul,

And it should bear me to thee, love ;
Like a ship on the sea, love,
Bear me, bear me, to thee, love !'

'Guns are thundering, seas are sundering, crowds are wondering,
Low on our lee, love.
Over and over the cannon-clouds cover brother and lover, but over and over
The whirl-wheels trundle the sea, love,
And on thro' the loud pealing pomp of her cloud
The great ship is going to thee, love ;
Blind to her mark, like a world thro' the dark,
Thundering, sundering, to the crowds wondering,
Thundering ever to thee, love.'

'I have come down to thee coming to me, love,
I stand, I stand
On the solid sand,
I see thee coming to me, love ;
The sea runs up to me on the sand,
I start—'t is as if thou hadst stretched thine hand
And touched me thro' the sea, love.
I feel as if I must die
For there's something longs to fly,
Fly and fly, to thee, love.
As the blood of the flower ere she blows
Is beating up to the sun,
And her roots do hold her down,

And it blushes and breaks undone
In a rose,
So my blood is beating in me, love!
I see thee nigh and nigher,
And my soul leaps up like sudden fire,
My life's in the air
To meet thee there,
To meet thee coming to me, love!
Over the sea,
Coming to me,
Coming, and coming to me, love!'

'The boats are lowered: I leap in first,
Pull, boys, pull! or my heart will burst!
More! more!—lend me an oar!—
I'm thro' the breakers! I'm on the shore!
I see thee waiting for me, love!'

'A sudden storm
Of sighs and tears,
A clenching arm,
A look of years.
In my bosom a thousand cries,
A flash like light before my eyes,
And I am lost in thee, love!'

THE GHOST'S RETURN.

SKIRLIN' an' birlin', tunin' an' croonin',
Reelin' an' skreelin', they piped doun the glen,
Lang Hugh an' black Sandie, Ian Dhu an' wee Dandie,
Wha wad na gang wi' the braw Hielan'men?

Skirlin' an' birlin', tunin' an' croonin',
Reelin' an' skreelin', they piped doun the glen,
Wi' a rout an' a shout, an' a' the lasses out,
Wha wad na gang wi' the braw Hielan'men?

Skirlin' an' birlin', tunin' an' croonin',
Reelin' an' skreelin', they piped doun the glen!
Wi' the hot light o' noon an' the blue sky aboon,
Ilka man sword in han' gaed the braw Hielan'men!

Ken ye why we weep? Think ye that they sleep,
Ilka man on his ain bluidy brae,
Ilk ane whar he died wi' a faeman by his side,
An' the pibroch can wauk him na mae?

Or the news cam' fra the fiel' we ken'd it a' too weel,
Our bonnie bonnie braw Hielan'men!
Not a foot ony stirred to meet the bluidy word,
As the death-roll cam' slow up the glen.

Had ye seen any sight of terror and affright?
Did their ghosts walk in white up the glen?

We saw na ony sight o' terror an' affright,
An' white 's no for braw tartaned men!

Fra the hour they gaed that day, oh the glen was fu' o' wae,
Our bonnie bonnie braw Hielan'men!
Sair, sair, an' mair an' mair, our hearts were fu' o' care,
And our een speerit aye doun the glen;

Till ae morn it did befa' that we waukit up a',
An' the light it was sweet, but an' ben,
An' a' that lang day we had na ony wae,
An' no ee cared to speer doun the glen.

Not a lassie but apart hid her wonder in her heart,
An' lay close till the day began to dee,
Lest her canty een confest the secret o' her breast,
For she said, 'They will a' weep but me.'

But when we met at een by the thorn upon the green,
An' the tale we a' tellt was the same,
Not a word mair we said, but ilk ane hid her head,
An' kenned that her man was at hame.

DAFT JEAN.

Daft Jean,
The waesome wean,
She cam' by the cottage, she cam' by the ha',
The laird's ha' o' Wutherstanelaw,
The cottar's cot by the birken shaw;
An' aye she gret,
To ilk ane she met,
For the trumpet had blawn an' her lad was awa'.

'Black, black,' sang she,
'Black, black my weeds shall be,
My love has widowed me!
Black, black!' sang she.

Daft Jean,
The waesome wean,
She cam' by the cottage, she cam' by the ha',
The laird's ha' o' Wutherstanelaw,
The cottar's cot by the birken shaw;
Nae mair she creepit,
Nae mair she weepit,

She stept 'mang the lasses the queen o' them a',
The queen o' them a',
The queen o' them a',
She stept 'mang the lasses the queen o' them a'.
For the fight it was fought i' the fiel' far awa',
An' claymore in han' for his love an' his lan',
The lad she lo'ed best he was foremost to fa'.

'White, white,' sang she,
'White, white, my weeds shall be,
I am no widow,' sang she,
'White, white, my wedding shall be,
White, white!' sang she.

Daft Jean,
The waesome wean,
She gaed na' to cottage, she gaed na' to ha',
But forth she creepit,
While a' the house weepit,
Into the snaw i' the eerie night-fa'.

At morn we found her,
The lammies stood round her,
The snaw was her pillow, her sheet was the snaw;
Pale she was lying,
Singing and dying,
A' for the laddie wha fell far awa'.

'White, white,' sang she,
'My love has married me,
White, white, my weeds shall be,
White, white, my wedding shall be,
White, white,' sang she!

THE RECRUITS' BALL.

FIDDLER LOQUITUR.

HEIGHO, fiddlestick, fiddlestick, fiddlestick,
Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddle for a king!
Heigh, pretty Kitty! heigh, jolly Polly!
Up with the heels, girls! fling, lasses, fling!
Heigh there! stay there! that's not the way there!
Oh Johnny, Johnny,
Oh Johnny, Johnny,
Ho, ho, everybody all round the ring!

Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddlestick, fiddlestick,
Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddle for a king!
Heigh, pretty Kitty! heigh, jolly Polly!
Up with the heels, girls! swing, girls, swing!
Foot, boys! foot, boys! to 't, boys! do 't, boys!
Ho, Bill! ho, Jill! ho, Will! ho, Phil!
Ho, Johnny, Johnny,
Ho, Johnny, Johnny,
Ho, ho, everybody, all round the ring!

Deuce take the fiddle,
Deuce take the fiddle,
Deuce take the jolly fiddle, deuce take the fiddler!
Here goes the fiddle,
Here goes the fiddle,
Here goes the jolly fiddle, here goes the fiddler!

Ned, boy! your head, boy!
She'll strike you dead, boy!
There she goes at your nose!
Deuce strike you dead, boy!

Call, boys! bawl, boys!
Deuce take us all, boys!
Here we go, yes or no,
Deuce take us all, boys!

Deuce take the wall, boys,
Deuce take the floor, boys,
Deuce take the jolly floor,
Deuce take us all, boys!

There goes the wall, boys!
There goes the door, boys!
Round they swing in a ring!
There goes the floor, boys!

Lad, wench, roof, floor,
Wench, lad, wall, door!
Curse the ground, spin it round!
Deuce take us all, boys!

FOR CHARITY'S SAKE.

'Oh dark-eyed maid,'
The soldier said,
'I 've been wounded in many a fray,
But such a dart
As you shoot to my heart
I never felt till to-day.

'Then give to me
Kisses, one, two, three,
All for dear Charity's sake.
And pity my pain,
And meet me again,
Or else my heart must break.'

Peggy was kind,
She would save the blind
Black fly that shimmered the ale,
And her quick hand stopped
If a grass-moth dropped
In the drifted snows of the pail.

One, two, three,
Kisses gave she,
All for dear Charity's sake;
And she pitied his pain,
And she met him again,
For fear his heart should break.

The bugle blew,
The merry flag flew,
The squadron clattered the town;
The twigs were bright on the minster elm,
He wore a primrose in his helm
As they clattered thro' the town.
Heydey, holiday, on we go!
Heydey, holiday, blow boys, blow!
Clattering thro' the town.

And when the minster leaves were sear,
On a far red field by a dark sea drear,
In dust and thunder, and cheer, boys, cheer,
The bold dragoon went down.

Shiver, poor Peggy, the wind blows high;
Beg a penny as I go by,
All for sweet Charity's sake:
Hold the thin hand from the shawl,
Turn the wan face to the wall,
Turn the face, let the hot tears fall,
For fear your heart should break.

WIND.

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the winter stark,
Oh the level dark,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the mystery
Of the blasted tree
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the owlet's croon
To the haggard moon,
To the waning moon,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!

Oh the fleshless stare,
Oh the windy hair,
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold !
Oh the cold sigh,
Oh the hollow cry,
The lean and hollow cry,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold !
Oh the white sight,
Oh the shuddering night,
The shivering shuddering night,
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

'WHEN THE RAIN IS ON THE ROOF.'

LORD, I am poor, and know not how to speak,
But since Thou art so great,
Thou needest not that I should speak to Thee well.
All angels speak unto Thee well.

Lord, Thou hast all things: what Thou wilt is Thine.
More gold and silver than the sun and moon;
All flocks and herds, all fish in every sea;
Mountains and valleys, cities and all farms;
Cots and all men, harvests and years of fruit.
Is any king arrayed like Thee, who wearest
A new robe every morning? Who is crowned
As Thou, who settest heaven upon thy head?
But as for me—
For me, if he be dead, I have but Thee!
Therefore, because Thou art my sole possession,
I will not fear to speak to Thee who art mine,
For who doth dread his own?

Lord, I am very sorrowful. I know
That Thou delightest to do well; to wipe

Tears from all eyes; to bind the broken-hearted;
To comfort them that mourn; to give to them
Beauty for ashes, and to garb with joy
The naked soul of grief. And what so good
But Thou that wilt canst do it? Which of all
Thy works is less in wonder and in praise
Than this poor heart's desire? Give me, oh Lord,
My heart's desire! Wilt Thou refuse my prayer
Who givest when no man asketh? How great things,
How unbesought, how difficult, how strange,
Thou dost in daily pleasure! Who is like Thee,
Oh Lord of Life and Death? The year is dead;
It smouldered in its smoke to the white ash
Of winter: but Thou breathest and the fire
Is kindled, and Thy summer bounty burns.
This is a marvel to me. Day is buried;
And where they laid him in the west I see
The mounded mountains. Yet shall he come back;
Not like a ghost that rises from his grave.
But in the east the palace gates will ope,
And he comes forth out of the feast, and I
Behold him and the glory after him,
Like to a messaged angel with wide arms
Of rapture, all the honour in his eyes,
And blushing with the King. In the dark hours
Thou hast been busy with him: for he went
Down westward, and he cometh from the east,
Not as toil-stained from travel, tho' his course

And journey in the secrets of the night
Be far as earth and heaven. This is a sum
Too hard for me, oh Lord; I cannot do it.
But Thou hast set it, and I know with Thee
There is an answer. Man also, oh Lord,
Is clear and whole before Thee. Well I know
That the strong skein and tangle of our life
Thou holdest by the end. The mother dieth—
The mother dieth ere her time, and like
A jewel in the cinders of a fire,
The child endures. Also, the son is slain,
And she who bore him shrieks not while the steel
Doth hack her sometime vitals, and transfix
The heart she throbbed with. How shall these things be?
Likewise, oh Lord, man that is born of woman,
Who built him of her tenderness, and gave
Her sighs to breathe him, and for all his bones—
Poor trembler!—hath no wherewithal more stern
Than bowels of her pity, cometh forth
Like a young lion from his den. Ere yet
His teeth be fangled he hath greed of blood,
And gambols for the slaughter: and being grown,
Sudden, with terrible mane and mouthing thunder,
Like a thing native to the wilderness
He stretches toward the desert; while his dam,
As a poor dog that nursed the king of beasts,
Strains at her sordid chain, and, with set ear,
Hath yet a little longer, in the roar

And backward echo of his windy flight,
Him, seen no more. This also is too hard—
Too hard for me, oh Lord! I cannot judge it.
Also the armies of him are as dust.
A little while the storm and the great rain
Beat him, and he abideth in his place,
But the suns scorch on him, and all his sap
And strength, whereby he held against the ground,
Is spent; as in the unwatched pot on the fire,
When that which should have been the children's blood
Scarce paints the hollow iron. Then Thou callest
Thy wind. He passeth like the stowre and dust
Of roads in summer. A brief while it casts
A shadow, and beneath the passing cloud
Things not to pass do follow to the hedge,
Swift heaviness runs under with a show,
And draws a train, and what was white is dark;
But at the hedge it falleth on the fields—
It falleth on the greenness of the grass;
The grass between its verdure takes it in,
And no man heedeth. Surely, oh Lord God,
If he has gone down from me, if my child
Nowhere in any lands that see the sun
Maketh the sunshine pleasant, if the earth
Hath smoothed o'er him as waters o'er a stone,
Yet is he further from Thee than the day
After its setting? Shalt Thou not, oh Lord,
Be busy with him in the under dark,

And give him journey thro' the secret night,
As far as earth and heaven? Aye, tho' Thou slay me
Yet will I trust in Thee, and in his flesh
Shall he see God! But, Lord, tho' I am sure
That Thou canst raise the dead, oh what has he
To do with death? Our days of pilgrimage
Are three-score years and ten; why should he die?
Lord, this is grievous, that the heathen rage,
And because they imagined a vain thing,
That Thou shouldst send the just man that feared Thee,
To smite it from their hands. Lord, who are they,
That this my suckling lamb is their burnt-offering?
That with my staff, oh Lord, their fire is kindled,
My ploughshare Thou dost beat into Thy sword,
The blood Thou givest them to drink is mine?
Let it be far from Thee to do to mine
What if I did it to mine own, Thy curse
Avengeth. Do I take the children's bread
And give it to the dogs? Do I rebuke
So widely that the aimless lash comes down
On innocent and guilty? Do I lift
The hand of goodness by the elbowed arm
And break it on the evil? Not so. Not so.
Lord what advantageth it to be God
If Thou do less than I?
Have mercy on me!
Deal not with me according to mine anger!
Thou knowest if I lift my voice against Thee,

'T is but as he who in his fierce despair
Dasheth his head against the dungeon-stone,
Sure that but one can suffer. Yet, oh Lord,
If Thou hast heard—if my loud passion reached
Thine awful ear—and yet, I think, oh Father,
I did not rage, but my most little anger
Borne in the strong arms of my mighty love
Seemed of the other's stature—oh, good Lord,
Bear witness now against me. Let me see
And taste that Thou art good. Thou who art slow
To wrath, oh pause upon my quick offence,
And show me mortal! Thou whose strength is made
Perfect in weakness, ah, be strong in me,
For I am weak indeed! How weak, oh Lord,
Thou knowest who hast seen the unlifted sin
Lie on the guilty tongue that strove in vain
To speak it. Call my madness from the tombs!
Let the dumb fiend confess Thee! If I sinned
In silence, if I looked the fool i' the face
And answered to his heart, 'There is no God,'
Now in mine hour stretch forth Thy hand, oh Lord,
And let me be ashamed. As when in sleep
I dream, and in the horror of my dream
Fall to the empty place below the world
Where no man is: no light, no life, no help,
No hope! And all the marrow in my bones
Leaps in me, and I rend the night with fear!
And he who lieth near me thro' the dark

Stretcheth an unseen hand, and all is well.
Tho' Thou shouldst give me all my heart's desire,
What is it in Thine eyes? Give me, oh God,
My heart's desire! my heart's desire, oh God!
As a young bird doth bend before its mother,
Bendeth and crieth to its feeding mother,
So bend I for that good thing before Thee.
It trembleth on the rock with many cries,
It bendeth with its breast upon the rock,
And worships in the hunger of its heart.
I tremble on the rock with many cries,
I bend my beating breast against the rock,
And worship in the hunger of my heart.
Give me that good thing ere I die, my God!
Give me that very good thing! Thou standest, Lord,
By all things, as one standeth after harvest
By the threshed corn, and, when the crowding fowl
Beseech him, being a man and seeing as men,
Hath pity on their cry, respecting not
The great and little barley, but at will
Dipping one hand into the golden store
Straweth alike; nevertheless to them
Whose eyes are near their meat and do esteem
By conscience of their bellies, grain and grain
Is stint or riches. Let it, oh my God,
Be far from Thee to measure out Thy gifts
Smaller and larger, or to say to me
Who am so poor and lean with the long fast

Of such a dreary dearth—to me whose joy
Is not as Thine—whose human heart is nearer
To its own good than Thou who art in heaven—
' Not this but this : ' to me who if I took
All that these arms could compass, all pressed down
And running over that this heart could hold,
All that in dreams I covet when the soul
Sees not the further bound of what it craves,
Might filch my mortal infinite from Thine
And leave Thee nothing less. Give me, oh Lord,
My heart's desire ! It profiteth Thee nought
Being withheld ; being given, where is that aught
It doth not profit me ? Wilt Thou deny
That which to Thee is nothing, but to me
All things ? Not so. Not so. If I were God
And Thou——Have mercy on me ! oh Lord ! Lord !

Lord, I am weeping. As Thou wilt, oh Lord,
Do with him as Thou wilt ; but oh, my God,
Let him come back to die ! Let not the fowls
O' the air defile the body of my child,
My own fair child that when he was a babe
I lift up in my arms and gave to Thee !
Let not his garment, Lord, be vilely parted,
Nor the fine linen which these hands have spun
Fall to the stranger's lot ! Shall the wild bird
—That would have pilfered of the ox—this year
Disdain the pens and stalls ? Shall her blind young,

That on the fleck and moult of brutish beasts
Had been too happy, sleep in cloth of gold
Whereof each thread is to this beating heart
As a peculiar darling? Lo, the flies
Hum o'er him! Lo, a feather from the crow
Falls in his parted lips! Lo, his dead eyes
See not the raven! Lo, the worm, the worm
Creeps from his festering horse! My God! my God!

Oh Lord, Thou doest well. I am content.
If Thou have need of him he shall not stay.
But as one calleth to a servant, saying
'At such a time be with me,' so, oh Lord,
Call him to Thee! Oh bid him not in haste
Straight whence he standeth. Let him lay aside
The soilèd tools of labour. Let him wash
His hands of blood. Let him array himself
Meet for his Lord, pure from the sweat and fume
Of corporal travail! Lord, if he must die,
Let him die here. Oh take him where Thou gavest!

And even as once I held him in my womb
Till all things were fulfilled, and he came forth,
So, oh Lord, let me hold him in my grave
Till the time come, and Thou, who settest when
The hinds shall calve, ordain a better birth;
And as I looked and saw my son, and wept
For joy, I look again and see my son,
And weep again for joy of him and Thee!

THE BOTANIST'S VISION.

THE sun that in Breadalbane's lake doth fall
Was melting to the sea down golden Tay,
When a cry came along the peopled way,
'Sebastopol is ours!' From that wild call
I turned, and leaning on a time-worn wall
Quaint with the touch of many an ancient day,
The mappèd mould and mildewed marquetry
Knew with my focussed soul; which bent down all
Its sense, power, passion, to the sole regard
Of each green minim, as it were but born
To that one use. I strode home stern and hard;
In my hot hands I laid my throbbing head,
And all the living world and all the dead
Began a march which did not end at morn.

THE ORPHAN'S SONG.

I HAD a little bird,
I took it from the nest;
I prest it, and blest it,
And nurst it in my breast.

I set it on the ground,
I danced round and round,
And sang about it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And oh but I love thee dearly!'

I make a little feast
Of food soft and sweet,
I hold it in my breast,
And coax it to eat;

I pit, and I pat,
I call it this and that,
And sing about it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

I may kiss, I may sing,
But I can't make it feed,
It taketh no heed
Of any pleasant thing.

I scolded, and I socked,
But it minded not a whit,
Its little mouth was locked,
And I could not open it.

Tho' with pit, and with pat,
And with this, and with that,
I sang about it so cheerly,
And 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly.'

But when the day was done,
And the room was at rest,
And I sat all alone
With my birdie in my breast,

And the light had fled,
And not a sound was heard,
Then my little bird
Lifted up its head,

And the little mouth
Loosed its sullen pride,
And it opened, it opened,
With a yearning strong and wide.

Swifter than I speak
I brought it food once more,
But the poor little beak
Was locked as before.

I sat down again,
And not a creature stirred,
I laid the little bird
Again where it had lain ;

And again when nothing stirred,
And not a word I said,
Then my little bird
Lifted up its head,
And the little beak
Loosed its stubborn pride,
And it opened, it opened,
With a yearning strong and wide.

It lay in my breast,
It uttered no cry,
'Twas famished, 'twas famished,
And I couldn't tell why.

I couldn't tell why,
But I saw that it would die,
For all that I kept dancing round and round,
And singing above it so cheerly,
With ' Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly ! '

I never look sad,
I hear what people say,
I laugh when they are gay
And they think I am glad.

My tears never start,
I never say a word,
But I think that my heart
Is like that little bird.

Every day I read,
And I sing, and I play,
But thro' the long day
It taketh no heed.

It taketh no heed
Of any pleasant thing,
I know it doth not read,
I know it doth not sing.

With my mouth I read,
With my hands I play,
My shut heart is shut,
Coax it how you may.

You may coax it how you may
While the day is broad and bright,
But in the dead night
When the guests are gone away,

And no more the music sweet
Up the house doth pass,
Nor the dancing feet
Shake the nursery glass ;

And I've heard my aunt
Along the corridor,
And my uncle gaunt
Lock his chamber door ;

And upon the stair
All is hushed and still,
And the last wheel
Is silent in the square ;

And the nurses snore,
And the dim sheets rise and fall,
And the lamplight's on the wall,
And the mouse is on the floor ;

And the curtains of my bed
Are like a heavy cloud,
And the clock ticks loud,
And sounds are in my head ;

And little Lizzie sleeps
Softly at my side,
It opens, it opens,
With a yearning strong and wide !

It yearns in my breast,
It utters no cry,
'Tis famished, 'tis famished,
And I feel that I shall die,
I feel that I shall die,
And none will know why.
Tho' the pleasant life is dancing round and round
And singing about me so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

TOMMY'S DEAD.

You may give over plough, boys,
You may take the gear to the stead,
All the sweat o' your brow, boys,
Will never get beer and bread.
The seed 's waste, I know, boys,
There's not a blade will grow, boys,
'T is cropped out, I trow, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

Send the colt to fair, boys,
He 's going blind, as I said,
My old eyes can't bear, boys,
To see him in the shed :
The cow 's dry and spare, boys,
She 's neither here nor there, boys,
I doubt she 's badly bred ;
Stop the mill to-morn, boys,
There 'll be no more corn, boys,
Neither white nor red ;
There 's no sign of grass, boys,

You may sell the goat and the ass, boys,
The land's not what it was, boys,
And the beasts must be fed:
You may turn Peg away, boys,
You may pay off old Ned,
We 've had a dull day, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

Move my chair on the floor, boys,
Let me turn my head:
She 's standing there in the door, boys,
Your sister Winifred!
Take her away from me, boys,
Your sister Winifred!
Move me round in my place, boys,
Let me turn my head,
Take her away from me, boys,
As she lay on her death-bed,
The bones of her thin face, boys,
As she lay on her death-bed!
I don't know how it be, boys,
When all 's done and said,
But I see her looking at me, boys,
Wherever I turn my head;
Out of the big oak-tree, boys,
Out of the garden-bed,
And the lily as pale as she, boys,
And the rose that used to be red.

There 's something not right, boys,
But I think it 's not in my head,
I 've kept my precious sight, boys—
The Lord be hallowed!
Outside and in
The ground is cold to my tread,
The hills are wizen and thin,
The sky is shrivelled and shred,
The hedges down by the loan
I can count them bone by bone,
The leaves are open and spread,
But I see the teeth of the land,
And hands like a dead man's hand,
And the eyes of a dead man's head.
There 's nothing but cinders and sand,
The rat and the mouse have fed,
And the summer 's empty and cold;
Over valley and wold
Wherever I turn my head
There 's a mildew and a mould,
The sun 's going out over head,
And I 'm very old,
And Tommy 's dead.

What am I staying for, boys,
You 're all born and bred,
'T is fifty years and more, boys,
Since wife and I were wed,

And she 's gone before, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

She was always sweet, boys,
Upon his curly head,
She knew she 'd never see 't, boys,
And she stole off to bed;
I 've been sitting up alone, boys,
For he 'd come home, he said,
But it 's time I was gone, boys,
For Tommy 's dead.

Put the shutters up, boys,
Bring out the beer and bread,
Make haste and sup, boys,
For my eyes are heavy as lead;
There 's something wrong i' the cup, boys,
There 's something ill wi' the bread,
I don't care to sup, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

I 'm not right, I doubt, boys,
I 've such a sleepy head,
I shall never more be stout, boys,
You may carry me to bed.
What are you about, boys,
The prayers are all said,
The fire 's raked out, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

The stairs are too steep, boys,
You may carry me to the head,
The night's dark and deep, boys,
Your mother's long in bed,
Tis time to go to sleep, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

I'm not used to kiss, boys,
You may shake my hand instead.
All things go amiss, boys,
You may lay me where she is, boys,
And I'll rest my old head:
'T is a poor world, this, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

'SHE TOUCHES A SAD STRING OF SOFT RECALL.'

RETURN, return! all night my lamp is burning,
All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn;
Like it, I fade and pale, when day returning
Bears witness that the absent can return,
Return, return.

Like it, I lessen with a lengthening sadness,
Like it, I burn to waste and waste to burn,
Like it, I spend the golden oil of gladness
To feed the sorrowy signal for return,
Return, return.

Like it, like it, whene'er the east wind sings,
I bend and shake; like it, I quake and yearn,
When Hope's late butterflies, with whispering wings,
Fly in out of the dark, to fall and burn—
Burn in the watchfire of return,
Return, return.

Like it, the very flame whereby I pine
Consumes me to its nature. While I mourn
My soul becomes a better soul than mine,
And from its brightening beacon I discern
My starry love go forth from me, and shine
Across the seas a path for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return! all night I see it burn,
All night it prays like me, and lifts a twin
Of palmèd praying hands that meet and yearn—
Yearn to the impleaded skies for thy return.
Day, like a golden fetter, locks them in,
And wans the light that withers, tho' it burn
As warmly still for thy return;
Still thro' the splendid load uplifts the thin
Pale, paler, palest patience that can learn
Nought but that votive sign for thy return—
That single suppliant sign for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return! lest haply, love, or e'er
Thou touch the lamp the light have ceased to burn,
And thou, who thro' the window didst discern
The wonted flame, shalt reach the topmost stair
To find no wide eyes watching there,
No withered welcome waiting thy return!
A passing ghost, a smoke-wreath in the air,

The flameless ashes, and the soulless urn,
Warm with the famished fire that lived to burn—
Burn out its lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life to light thy late return,
Return, return.

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